LIBRARY
Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.
No. Case, Division
No. Shelf, Section
No. Book, No.
The John M. Krebs Donation.
SCC
10,635
v. 3

THE

WORKS

OF

JOHN OWEN, D.D.

EDITED

BY THOMAS RUSSELL, M.A.

WITH

MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY WILLIAM ORME.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING

A CONTINUATION OF ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ;
OR A DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT;
THE REASON OF FAITH; AND
THE CAUSES, WAYS, AND MEANS OF UNDERSTANDING THE MIND OF GOD, AS REVEALED IN HIS WORD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR RICHARD BAYNES, 28, PATERNOSTER ROW:

And sold by J. Parker, Oxford; Deighton and Sons, Cambridge; D. Brown, Waugh and Innes, and H. S. Baynes and Co. Edinburgh; Chalmers and Collins, and M. Ogle, Glasgow; M. Keene, and R. M. Tims, Dublin.

1826.

PROPERTY OF PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CONTENTS

OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.

ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ: OR A DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BOOK IV.

CHAP. VI.

THE POSITIVE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE SANCTIFICATION OF BELIEVERS.

Page

Differences in the acts of sanctification as to order. The manner of the communication of holiness by the Spirit. The rule and measure whereof is the revealed will of God. As the rule of its acceptance is the covenant of grace. The nature of holiness as inward. Righteousness habitual and actual. False notions of holiness removed. The nature of a spiritual habit. Applied unto holiness, with its rules and limitations. Proved and confirmed. Illustrated and practically improved. The properties of holiness as a spiritual habit, declared. 1. Spiritual dispositions unto suitable acts. How expressed in the Scripture. With their effects. Contrary dispositions unto sin and holiness how consistent. 2. Power: the nature thereof; or what power is required in believers unto holy obedience; with its properties and effects in readiness and facility. Objections thereunto answered, and an inquiry on these principles, after true holiness in ourselves, directed. Gospel grace distinct from morality, and all other habits of the mind; proved by many arguments, especially its relation unto the mediation of Christ. The principal difference between evangelical holiness and all other habits of the mind, proved by the manner and way of its communication from the person of Christ, as the head of the church, and the peculiar efficiency of the Spirit therein. Moral honesty not gospel holiness 1

CHAP. VII.

OF THE ACTS AND DUTIES OF HOLINESS.

Actual inherent righteousness in duties of holiness and obedience, explained. The work of the Holy Spirit with respect thereunto. Distribution of the

Page

positive duties of holiness. Internal duties of holiness. External duties, and their difference. Effectual operation of the Holy Spirit necessary unto every act of holiness. Dependance on Providence with respect unto things natural, and on grace with respect unto things supernatural, compared. Arguments to prove the necessity of actual grace, unto every duty of holiness. Contrary designs and expressions of the Scripture and some men, about duties of holiness 74

CHAP. VIII.

MORTIFICATION OF SIN, THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF IT.

Mortification of sin, the second part of sanctification. Frequently prescribed and enjoined as a duty. What the name signifies, with the reason thereof: as also that of crucifying sin. The nature of the mortification of sin, explained. Indwelling sin in its principle, operations, and effects, the object of mortification. Contrariety between sin and grace. Mortification a partaking with the whole interest of grace against sin. How sin is mortified, and why the subduing of it is so called. Directions for the right discharge of this duty. Nature of it unknown to many. The Holy Spirit the author and cause of mortification in us. The manner of the operation of the Spirit in the mortification of sin. Particular means of the mortification of sin. Duties necessary unto the mortification of sin, directed unto by the Holy Ghost. Mistakes and errors of persons failing in this matter. How spiritual duties are to be managed, that sin may be mortified. Influence of the virtue of the death of Christ, as applied by the Holy Spirit, into the mortification of sin.. 87

BOOK V.

CHAP. I.

NECESSITY OF HOLINESS FROM THE CONSIDERATION OF THE NATURE OF GOD.

The necessity of evangelical holiness owned by all Christians: doctrines falsely charged with an inconsistency with it. Though owned by all, yet practised by few, and disadvantageously pleaded for by many; the true nature of it briefly expressed. First argument for the necessity of holiness from the nature of God; frequently proposed unto our consideration for that end. This argument cogent and unavoidable; pressed with its limitation. Not the nature of God absolutely, but as he is in Christ, the foundation of this necessity, and a most effectual motive unto the same end; the nature and efficacy

Page

of that motive declared. The argument enforced, from the consideration of our conformity unto God by holiness; with that communion and likeness with him which depend thereon; with our future everlasting enjoyment of him. True force of that consideration vindicated; merit rejected, and the substitution of morality in the room of gospel holiness. False accusations of the doctrine of grace, discarded; and the neglect of the true means of promoting gospel obedience, charged. The principal argument farther enforced, from the pre-eminence of our natures and persons by this conformity to God; and our accesses unto God thereby, in order unto our eternal enjoyment of him: as it also alone renders us useful in this world unto others. Two sorts of graces, by whose exercise we grow into conformity with God; those that are assimilating, as faith and love; and those which are declarative of that assimilation, as goodness or benignity, and truth. An objection against the necessity of holiness, from the freedom and efficacy of grace, answered 121

CHAP. II.

ETERNAL ELECTION A CAUSE OF AND MOTIVE UNTO HOLINESS.

Other arguments for the necessity of holiness, from God's eternal election. The argument from thence explained, improved, vindicated 152

CHAP. III.

HOLINESS NECESSARY FROM THE COMMANDS OF GOD.

Necessity of holiness proved, from the commands of God in the law and the gospel 169

CHAP. IV.

NECESSITY OF HOLINESS FROM GOD'S SENDING JESUS CHRIST.

The necessity of holiness proved from the design of God in sending Jesus Christ, with the ends of his mediation 198

CHAP. V.

NECESSITY OF HOLINESS FROM OUR CONDITION IN THIS WORLD.

Necessity of holiness farther argued, from our own state and condition in this world; with what is required of us with respect unto our giving glory to Jesus Christ 214

Page

THE REASON OF FAITH:

Or, an answer unto that inquiry, Wherefore we believe the Scripture to be the word of God: with the causes and nature of that faith wherewith we do so: wherein the grounds whereon the holy Scripture is believed to be the word of God, with faith divine and supernatural, are declared and vindicated 227

ΣΥΝΕΣΙΣ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΗ:

OR, THE CAUSES, WAYS, AND MEANS, OF UNDERSTANDING THE MIND OF GOD, AS REVEALED IN HIS WORD.

The Preface 369

CHAP. I.

Usurpation of the church of Rome, with reference unto the interpretation of the Scripture, or right understanding of the mind of God therein. Right and ability of all believers as to their own duty herein asserted. Importance of the truth proposed. The main question stated. The principal efficient cause of the understanding which believers have in the mind and will of God as revealed in the Scriptures, the Spirit of God himself. General assertions to be proved. Declared in sundry particulars. Inferences from them 375

CHAP. II.

The general assertion confirmed with testimonies of the Scripture. Psal. cxix. 18. opened at large. Objections answered; 2 Cor. iii. 13—18. explained. Isa. xxv. Luke i. 24. 45. opened. Eph. i. 17—19. explained and pleaded, in confirmation of the truth. Hos. xiv. 9 383

CHAP. III.

Other testimonies pleaded in the confirmation of the same truth; John xvi. 13. opened. How far all true believers are infallibly led into all truth, declared. And the manner how they are so. 1 John ii. 20. 27. explained. What assurance of the truth they have who are taught of God. 1 John v. 6. Job xxxvi. 22. John vi. 45. Practical truths inferred from the assertion proved .. 401

CHAP. IV.

The especial work of the Holy Spirit in the illumination of our minds unto the understanding of the Scripture, declared and vindicated. Objections proposed and answered. The nature of the work asserted. Psal. cxix. 18. Eph. i. 18. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Col. i. 13. Luke xxiv. 25. John v. 20. opened and vindicated 424

Page

CHAP. V.

Causes of the ignorance of the mind of God revealed in the Scripture; and of errors about it; what they are; and how they are removed..... 439

CHAP. VI.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the composing and disposal of the Scripture as a means of sacred illumination; the perspicuity of the Scripture unto the understanding of the mind of God declared and vindicated..... 456

CHAP. VII.

Means to be used for the right understanding of the mind of God in the Scripture. Those which are prescribed in a way of duty..... 470

CHAP. VIII.

The second sort of means for the interpretation of the Scripture, which are disciplinarian..... 482

CHAP. IX.

Helps ecclesiastical in the interpretation of the Scripture..... 502

BOOK IV.

THE

POSITIVE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

IN THE

SANCTIFICATION OF BELIEVERS.

CHAP. VI.

Differences in the acts of sanctification as to order. The manner of the communication of holiness by the Spirit. The rule and measure whereof is the revealed will of God. As the rule of its acceptance is the covenant of grace. The nature of holiness as inward. Righteousness habitual and actual. False notions of holiness removed. The nature of a spiritual habit. Applied unto holiness, with its rules and limitations. Proved and confirmed. Illustrated and practically improved. The properties of holiness as a spiritual habit, declared. 1. *Spiritual dispositions unto suitable acts. How expressed in the Scripture. With their effects. Contrary dispositions unto sin and holiness how consistent.* 2. *Power: the nature thereof; or what power is required in believers unto holy obedience; with its properties and effects in readiness and facility. Objections thereunto answered, and an inquiry on these principles, after true holiness in ourselves, directed. Gospel grace distinct from morality, and all other habits of the mind; proved by many arguments, especially its relation unto the mediation of Christ. The principal difference between evangelical holiness and all other habits of the mind, proved by the manner and way of its communication from the person of Christ, as the head of the church, and the peculiar efficiency of the Spirit therein. Moral honesty not gospel holiness.*

THE distinction we make between the acts of the Holy Ghost in the work of sanctification, concerneth more the order of teaching and instruction, than any order of precedency that is between the acts themselves. For that which we have passed through, concerning the cleansing of our natures and persons, doth not, in order of time, go before those other acts which leave a real and positive effect upon the soul, which we now enter upon the description of; nor

absolutely in order of nature. Yea, much of the means whereby the Holy Ghost purifieth us, consisteth in this other work of his which now lies before us. Only we thus distinguish them and cast them into this order, as the Scripture also doth, for the guidance of our understanding in them, and furtherance of our apprehension of them.

We, therefore, now proceed unto that part of the work of the Holy Spirit, whereby he communicates the great, permanent, positive effect of holiness unto the souls of believers, and whereby he guides and assists them in all the acts, works, and duties of holiness whatever, without which, what we do is not so, nor doth any way belong thereunto. And this part of his work we shall reduce unto two heads, which we shall first propose, and afterward clear and vindicate.

And our first assertion is, *That in the sanctification of believers, the Holy Ghost doth work in them, in their whole souls, their minds, wills, and affections, a gracious supernatural habit, principle, and disposition of living unto God, wherein the substance or essence, the life and being, of holiness doth consist.* This is that spirit which is born of the Spirit, that new creature, that new and divine nature, which is wrought in them, and whereof they are made partakers. Herein consists that image of God, whereunto our natures are repaired by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby we are made conformable unto God, firmly and steadfastly adhering unto him through faith and love. That there is such a divine principle, such a gracious supernatural habit, wrought in all them that are born again, hath been fully proved in our assertion and description of the work of regeneration. It is therefore acknowledged, that the first supernatural infusion or communication of this principle of spiritual light and life, preparing, fitting, and enabling all the faculties of our souls unto the duties of holiness, according to the mind of God, doth belong unto the work of our first conversion. But the preservation, cherishing, and increase of it belongs unto our sanctification, both its infusion and preservation being necessarily required unto holiness. Hereby is the tree made good, that the fruit of it may be good, and without which it will not so be. This is our new nature, which ariseth not from precedent actions of holiness, but is the root of them all. Habits acquired by a multitude of acts,

whether in things moral or artificial, are not a new nature, nor can be so called, but a readiness for acting from use and custom. But this nature is from God its parent, it is that in us which is born of God. And it is common unto, or the same in, all believers, as to its kind and being, though not as to degrees and exercise. It is that we cannot learn, which cannot be taught us but by God only, as he teaches other creatures in whom he planteth a natural instinct. The beauty and glory hereof, as it is absolutely inexpressible, so have we spoken somewhat to it before. Conformity to God, likeness to Christ, compliance with the Holy Spirit, interest in the family of God, fellowship with angels, separation from darkness and the world, do all consist herein.

Secondly, The *matter* of our holiness consists in our *actual obedience* unto God, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace. For God promiseth to write his law in our hearts, that we may fear him and walk in his statutes. And concerning this, in general, we may observe two things:

1. *That there is a certain fixed rule and measure of this obedience,* in a conformity and answerableness whereunto it doth consist. This is the revealed will of God in the Scripture; Micah vi. 8. God's will, I say, as revealed unto us in the word, is the rule of our obedience. A rule it must have, which nothing else can pretend to be. The secret will or hidden purposes of God are not the rule of our obedience; Deut. xxix. 29. much less are our own imaginations, inclinations, or reasons so; neither doth any thing, though never so specious, which we do in compliance with them or by their direction, belong thereunto; Col. ii. 19—22. But the word of God is the adequate rule of all holy obedience. (1.) It is so *materially*. All that is commanded in that word belongs unto our obedience, and nothing else doth so. Hence are we so strictly required neither to add unto it, nor to diminish or take any thing from it; Deut. iv. 2. xii. 32. Josh. i. 7. Prov. xxx. 6. Rev. xxii. 18. (2.) It is so *formally;* that is, we are not to do only what is commanded, all that is commanded, and nothing else, but whatever we do we are to do it because it is commanded, or it is no part of our obedience or holiness; Deut. vi. 24, 25. xxix. 19. Psal. cxix. 9. I know there is an in-bred light of nature as yet remaining in us, which gives great direction as to moral

good and evil, commanding the one and forbidding the other; Rom. ii. 14, 15. But this light, however it may be made subservient and subordinate thereunto, is not the rule of gospel holiness as such, nor any part of it. The law which God by his grace writes in our hearts, answers unto the law that is written in the word that is given unto us; and as the first is the only principle, so the latter is the only rule, of our evangelical obedience. For this end hath God promised that his word and his Spirit shall always accompany one another, the one to quicken our souls, and the other to guide our lives; Isa. lix. 20. And the word of God may be considered as our rule in a threefold respect: (1.) As it requires the image of God in us. The habitual rectitude of our nature with respect unto God, and our living to him, is enjoined us in the word, yea, and wrought in us thereby. The whole renovation of our natures, the whole principle of holiness before described, is nothing but the word changed into grace in our hearts; for we 'are born again by the incorruptible seed of the word of God.' The Spirit worketh nothing in us, but what the word first requireth of us. It is, therefore, the rule of the inward principle of spiritual life, and the growth thereof is nothing but its increase in conformity to that word. (2.) With respect unto all the actual frames, designs, and purposes of the heart, all the internal actings of our minds, all the volitions of the will, all the motions of our affections, are to be regulated by that word which requires us to love the Lord our God with all our minds, all our souls, and all our strength. Hereby is their regularity or irregularity to be tried. All that holiness which is in them consists in their conformity to the revealed will of God. (3.) With respect unto all our outward actions and duties, private, public, of piety, of righteousness, towards ourselves or others; Titus ii. 12. this is the rule of our holiness. So far as what we are, and what we do, answers thereunto, so far are we holy and no farther. Whatever acts of devotion or duties of morality may be performed without respect hereunto, belong not to our sanctification.

2. As there is a rule of our *performance* of this obedience, so there is a rule of the *acceptance* of our obedience with God. And this is the tenor of the new covenant; Gen. xvii. 1.

What answers hereunto is accepted, and what doth not so is rejected, both as to the universality of the whole, and the sincerity that accompanies each particular duty in it. And these two things, universality and sincerity, answer now, as to some certain ends, the legal perfection at first required of us. In the estate of original righteousness, the rule of our acceptance with God, in our obedience, was the law and covenant of works. And this required that it should be absolute, perfect in parts and degrees, without the least intermixture of sin with our good, or interposition of it in the least instance, which was inconsistent with that covenant. But now, although we are renewed again by grace in the image of God really and truly, yet not absolutely nor perfectly, but only in part. We have yet remaining in us a contrary principle of ignorance and sin, which we must always conflict withal; Gal. v. 16, 17. Wherefore, God in the covenant of grace is pleased to accept of that holy obedience which is universal as to all parts, in all known instances of duty, and sincere as to the manner of their performance. What, in particular, is required hereunto, is not our present work to declare. I only aim to fix, in general, the rule of the acceptance of this holy obedience. Now the reason hereof is not, that a lower and more imperfect kind of righteousness, holiness, and obedience, will answer all the ends of God and his glory now under the new covenant, than would have done so under the old. Nothing can be imagined more distant from the truth, or more dishonourable to the gospel, nor that seems to have a nearer approach unto the making of Christ the minister of sin. For what would he be else, if he had procured that God would accept of a weak imperfect obedience, accompanied with many failings, infirmities, and sins, being in nothing complete, in the room and stead of that which was complete, perfect, and absolutely sinless, which he first required of us? Yea, God having determined to exalt and glorify the holy properties of his nature, in a more eminent and glorious manner under the new covenant than the old, for which cause and end alone it is so exalted and preferred above it, it was necessary that there should be a righteousness and obedience required therein, far more complete, eminent, and glorious, than that required in the other. But the reason of this difference lies solely herein, that our evangelical obedience

which is accepted with God, according to the tenor of the new covenant, doth not hold the same place which our obedience should have had under the covenant of works. For therein it should have been our righteousness absolutely before God, that whereby we should have been justified in his sight, even the works of the law, and for which, in a due proportion of justice, we should have been eternally rewarded. But this place is now filled up by the righteousness and obedience of Christ our mediator, which, being the obedience of the Son of God, is far more eminent and glorious, or tends more to the manifestation of the properties of God's nature, and therein the exaltation of his glory, than all that we should have done had we abode steadfast in the covenant of works. Whereunto then, it may be some will say, serves our holiness and obedience, and what is the necessity of it? I must defer the answering of this inquiry unto its proper place, where I shall prove at large the necessity of this holiness, and demonstrate it from its proper principles and ends. In the mean time, I say only, in general, that as God requireth it of us, so he hath appointed it as the only means whereby we may express our subjection to him, our dependance on him, our fruitfulness and thankfulness, the only way of our communion and intercourse with him, of using and improving the effects of his love, the benefits of the mediation of Christ, whereby we may glorify him in this world, and the only orderly way whereby we may be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, which is sufficient, in general, to manifest both its necessity and its use. These things being then, in general, premised, I shall comprise what I have farther to offer in the declaration and vindication of gospel-sanctification and holiness, in the two ensuing assertions.

I. There is wrought and preserved in the minds and souls of all believers, by the Spirit of God, a supernatural principle or habit of grace and holiness, whereby they are made meet and enabled to live unto God, and perform that obedience which he requireth and accepteth through Christ in the covenant of grace, essentially or specifically distinct from all natural habits, intellectual and moral, however or by what means soever acquired or improved.

II. There is an immediate work or effectual operation of the Holy Spirit by his grace, required unto every act of holy

obedience, whether internal only in faith and love, or external also; that is, unto all the holy actings of our understandings, wills, and affections, and unto all duties of obedience in our walking before God.

The first of these assertions I affirm not only to be true, but of so great weight and importance, that our hope of life and salvation depends thereon, and it is the second great principle constituting our Christian profession. And there are four things that are to be confirmed concerning it. 1. That there is such a *habit* or principle *supernatural*, infused or created in believers by the Holy Ghost, and always abiding in them. 2. That, according to the nature of all *habits*, it *inclines* and *disposeth* the mind, will, and affections, unto acts of holiness suitable unto its own nature, and with regard unto its proper end, and to make us meet to live unto God. 3. It doth not only incline and dispose the mind, but gives it *power*, and enables it to live unto God in all holy obedience. 4. That it differs *specifically* from all other habits, *intellectual* or *moral*, that by any means we may acquire or attain; or *spiritual gifts* that may be conferred on any persons whatever.

In the handling of these things, I shall manifest the difference that is between a *spiritual supernatural life* of evangelical holiness, and a course of *moral virtue*, which some, to the rejection of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, do endeavour to substitute in the room thereof. Such a spiritual, heavenly, supernatural life, so denominated from its nature, causes, acts, and ends, we must be partakers of in this world, if ever we mind to attain eternal life in another.

And herein we shall take what view we are able of the nature, glory, and beauty of holiness, and do confess, it is but little of them which I can comprehend. It is a matter indeed often spoken unto; but the essence and true nature of it, are much hidden from the eyes of all living men. The sense of what the Scripture proposeth, what I believe, and what I desire an experience of, that I shall endeavour to declare. But as we are not in this life perfect in the duties of holiness, no more are we in the knowledge of its nature.

First, therefore, I say, it is a *gracious supernatural habit*, or a principle of spiritual life. And with respect hereunto I shall briefly do these three things: 1. Shew whatI mean by such a *habit*. 2. Prove that there is such a *habit* re-

quired unto holiness, yea, that the *nature* of holiness consists therein. 3. Declare, in general, the *properties* of it.

1. Our first inquiry is after the *essence* and *form* of holiness, that from which any one is truly and really made and denominated holy; or what is the *formal reason* of that holiness which our nature is partaker of in this world. This must be something peculiar, something excellent and sacred, as that which constitutes the great and only difference that is between mankind, on their own part, in the sight of God, with respect unto eternity. Every one that hath this holiness pleaseth God, is accepted with him, and shall come to the enjoyment of him. And every one that hath it not, is rejected of him here and hereafter.

And this holiness, in the first place, doth not consist in any *single acts of obedience* unto God, though good in their own nature, and acceptable unto him. For such acts may be performed, yea many of them, by unholy persons, with examples whereof the Scripture aboundeth. Cain's sacrifice and Ahab's repentance, were signal single acts of obedience materially; yet no acts of holiness formally, nor did either make or denominate them holy. And our apostle tells us, that men may give 'all their goods to the poor, and their bodies to be burned,' and yet be nothing; 1 Cor. xiii. yet in single acts who can go farther? Such fruits may spring from seed that hath no root. Single acts may evidence holiness, as Abraham's obedience in sacrificing his son, but they constitute none holy; nor will a series, a course, a multiplication, of acts and duties of obedience either constitute or denominate any one so; Isa. 1. 11—15. All the duties, a series and multiplication whereof are there rejected for want of holiness, were good in themselves, and appointed of God. Nor doth it consist in an habitual disposition of mind unto any outward duties of piety, devotion, or obedience, however obtained or acquired. Such habits there are both intellectual and moral. Intellectual habits are arts and sciences. When men by custom, usage, and frequent acts in the exercise of any science, art, or mystery, do get a ready facility in and unto all the parts and duties of it, they have an intellectual habit therein. It is so in things moral, as to virtues and vices. There are some seeds and sparks of moral virtues remaining in the ruins of depraved nature, as of justice, temperance,

fortitnde, and the like. Hence God calls on profligate sinners to remember and shew themselves men, or not to act contrary to the principles, and light of nature, which are inseparable from us as we are men; Isa. xliv. 8. These principles may be so excited in the exercise of natural light, and improved by education, instruction, and example, until persons, by an assiduous diligent performance of the acts and duties of them, may attain such a readiness unto them and facility in them, as is not by an outward means easily changed or diverted; and this is a moral habit; in like manner, in the duties of piety and religion, in acts of outward obedience unto God, men by the same means may so accustom themselves unto them, as to have an habitual disposition unto their exercise. I doubt not but that it is so unto a high degree with many superstitious persons. But in all these things, the acts do still precede the habits of the same nature and kind, which are produced by them and not otherwise. But this holiness is such a habit or principle as is antecedent unto all acts of the same kind, as we shall prove. There never was by any, nor ever can be, any act or duty of true holiness performed, where there was not in order of nature antecedently a habit of holiness in the persons by whom they are performed. Many acts and duties, for the substance of them good and approveable, may be performed without it, but no one that hath the proper form and nature of holiness can be so. And the reason is, because every act of true holiness must have something supernatural in it, from an internal renewed principle of grace, and that which hath not so, be it otherwise what it will, is no act or duty of true holiness.

And I call this principle of holiness a *habit;* not as though it were absolutely of the same kind with *acquired habits,* and would in all things answer to our conceptions and descriptions of them: but we only call it so, because, in its effects and manner of operation, it agreeth in sundry things with acquired intellectual or moral habits. But it hath much more conformity unto a natural unchangeable instinct, than unto any acquired habit. Wherefore, God chargeth it on men, that in their obedience unto him they did not answer that instinct which is in other creatures towards their lords and benefactors; Isa. i. 3. and which they cordially observe; Jer. viii. 7. But herein God 'teacheth us more than the

beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven;' Job xxxv. 11.

This, therefore, is that which I intend; a virtue, a power, a principle, of spiritual life and grace, wrought, created, infused into our souls, and inlaid in all the faculties of them, constantly abiding, and unchangeably residing, in them, which is antecedent unto, and the next cause of, all acts of true holiness whatever. And this is that, as was said, wherein the nature of holiness doth consist, and from which, in those that are adult, the actual discharge of all duties and works of holiness is inseparable. This abideth always in and with all that are sanctified, whence they are always holy, and not only so when they are actually exercised in the duties of holiness. Hereby are they prepared, disposed, and enabled, unto all duties of obedience, as we shall shew immediately, and by the influence hereof into their acts and duties do they become holy, and no otherwise.

For the farther explanation of it, I shall only add three things.

(1.) That this *habit* or principle, thus wrought and abiding in us, doth not, if I may so say, firm its own station, or abide and continue in us, by its own natural efficacy, in adhering unto the faculties of our souls. Habits that are acquired by many actions, have a natural efficacy to preserve themselves, until some opposition that is too hard for them, prevail against them, which is frequently (though not easily) done. But this is preserved in us by the constant powerful actings and influence of the Holy Ghost. He which works it in us, doth also preserve it in us. And the reason hereof is, because the spring of it is in our head Christ Jesus; it being only an emanation of virtue and power from him unto us by the Holy Ghost; if this be not actually and always continued, whatever is in us would die and wither of itself. See Eph. iv. 16. Col. iii. 3. John iv. 14. It is in us as the fructifying sap is in a branch of the vine or olive. It is there really and formally, and is the next cause of the fruit-bearing of the branch. But it doth not live and abide by itself, but by a continual emanation and communication from the root. Let that be intercepted and it quickly withers. So it is with this principle in us, with respect unto its root Christ Jesus.

(2.) Though this principle or *habit* of holiness be of the same

kind or nature in all believers, in all that are sanctified, yet there are in them very *distinct degrees* of it. In some it is more strong, lively, vigorous, and flourishing, in others more weak, feeble, and inactive, and this in so great variety, and on so many occasions, as cannot here be spoken unto.

(3.) That although this *habit* and principle is not acquired by any or many acts of duty or obedience, yet is it in a way of duty *preserved, increased, strengthened,* and *improved* thereby. God hath appointed that we should live in the exercise of it, and in and by the multiplication of its acts and duties, is it kept alive and stirred up, without which it will be weakened and decay.

2. This being what I intend as to the substance of it, we must, in the next place, shew, that there is such a *spiritual habit or principle of spiritual life* wrought in believers, wherein their holiness doth consist. Some few testimonies of many shall suffice as to its present confirmation.

The work of it is expressed, Deut. xxx. 6. 'The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, that thou mayest live.' The end of holiness is, that we may live, and the principal work of holiness is, to love the Lord our God with all our hearts and souls. And this is the effect of God's circumcising our hearts, without which it will not be. Every act of love and fear, and consequently of every duty of holiness whatever, is consequential unto God's circumcising of our hearts. But it should seem that this work of God is only a removal of hinderances, and doth not express the collation of the principle which we assert. I answer, that although it were easy to demonstrate, that this work of circumcising our hearts cannot be effected without an implantation of the principle pleaded for in them, yet it shall suffice at present to evince from hence, that this effectual work of God upon our hearts is antecedently necessary unto all acts of holiness in us. But herewithal, God writes his law in our hearts; Jer. xxxi. 33. 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.' The habit or principle which we have described, is nothing but a transcript of the law of God, implanted and abiding on our hearts, whereby we comply with, and answer unto, the whole will of God therein. This is holiness in the habit and principle of it. This is more

fully expressed, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. 'A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' The whole of all that actual obedience, and all those duties of holiness which God requireth of us, is contained in these expressions; 'ye shall walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments to do them.' Antecedent hereunto, and as the principle and cause thereof, God gives a new heart and a new spirit. This new heart is a heart with the law of God written in it, as before mentioned; and this new spirit is the habitual inclination of that heart unto the life of God, or all duties of obedience. And herein the whole of what we have asserted, is confirmed; namely, that antecedently unto all duties and acts of holiness whatever, and as the next cause of them, there is, by the Holy Ghost, a new spiritual principle or habit of grace, communicated unto us, and abiding in us, from whence we are made and denominated holy.

It is yet more expressly revealed and declared in the New Testament; John iii. 6. There is a work of the Spirit of God upon us in our regeneration, we are 'born again of the Spirit.' And there is the product of this work of the Spirit of God in us, that which is born in this new birth, and that is spirit also. It is something existing in us, that is of a spiritual nature and spiritual efficacy. It is something abiding in us, acting in a continual opposition against the flesh or sin; as Gal. v. 17. and unto all duties of obedience unto God. And until this spirit is formed in us, that is, our whole souls have a furnishment of spiritual power and ability, we cannot perform any one act that is spiritually good, nor any one act of vital obedience. This spirit, or spiritual nature, which is born of the Spirit, by which alone we are enabled to live to God, is that habit of grace or principle of holiness which we intend. And so also is it called a new creature. 'He that is in Christ is a new creature;' 1 Cor. v. 17. It is something, that by an almighty creating act of the power of God by his Spirit, that hath the nature of a living creature, is produced in the souls of all that are in Christ Jesus. And as it is called the new creature, so it is also a divine nature; 2 Pet. i. 4. and a nature is the principle of all operations; and this is what we plead for. The

Spirit of God createth a new nature in us, which is the principle and next cause of all acts of the life of God. Where this is not, whatever else there may be, there is no evangelical holiness. This is that whereby we are enabled to live unto God, to fear him, to walk in his ways, and to yield obedience according to his mind and will. See Eph. iv. 23, 24. Col. iii. 10, 11. This the Scripture plentifully testifieth unto; but withal I must add, that as to the proper nature or essence of it, no mind can apprehend it, no tongue can express it, none can perfectly understand its glory; some few things may be added to illustrate it.

(1.) This is that whereby we have *union with Jesus Christ*, the head of the church. Originally and efficiently the Holy Spirit dwelling in him and us, is the cause of this union. But formally, this new principle of grace is so. It is that whereby we become 'members of his bones and of his flesh;' Eph. v. 30. As Eve was of Adam; she was one with him, because she had the same nature with him, and that derived from him, which the apostle alludeth unto, so are we of him, partakers of the same divine nature with him. Thus, he that is 'joined unto the Lord is one spirit;' 1 Cor. vi. 17. that is, of one and the same spiritual nature with him; Heb. ii. 11. 14. How excellent is this grace, which gives us our interest in, and continuity unto, the body of Christ, and to his person as our head. It is the same grace in the kind thereof, which is in the holy nature of Christ, and renders us one with him.

(2.) Our *likeness* and *conformity unto God* consists herein. For it is the reparation of his image in us; Eph. iv. 23, 24. Col. iii. 10. Something, I hope, I apprehend concerning this image of God in believers, and of their likeness unto him, how great a privilege it is, what honour, safety, and security depend thereon, what duties are required of us on the account thereof: but perfectly to conceive or express the nature and glory of it, we cannot attain unto, but should learn to adore the grace whence it doth proceed, and is bestowed on us, to admire the love of Christ, and the efficacy of his mediation, whereby it is renewed in us; but the thing itself is ineffable.

(3.) It is our *life*, our *spiritual life*, whereby we live to God. Life is the foundation and sum of all excellencies:

without this, we are dead in trespasses and sins, and how we are quickened by the Holy Ghost, hath been declared. But this is the internal principle of life, whence all vital acts in the life of God do proceed. And, whereas, we know not well what is the true form and essence of life natural, only we find it, discern it, and judge of it by its effects; much less do we know the form and essence of life spiritual, which is far more excellent and glorious. This is that life which is 'hid with Christ in God;' Col. iii. 3. In which words, the apostle draws a veil over it, as knowing that we are unable steadfastly to behold its glory and beauty.

But before I proceed unto a farther description of this principle of holiness in its effects, as before laid down, it may not be amiss *practically* to call over these general considerations of its nature; and our own concernment in this truth, which is no empty notion, will be therein declared. And,

First, We may learn hence, not to satisfy ourselves, or not to rest, in any *acts* or *duties* of obedience, in any good works, how good and useful soever in themselves, nor howsoever multiplied by us, unless there be a *vital principle of holiness* in our hearts. A few honest actions, a few useful duties, do satisfy some persons, that they are as holy as they should be, or as they need to be. And some men's religion hath consisted in the multiplying of outward duties, that they might be meritorious for themselves and others. But God expressly rejecteth not only such duties, but the greatest multitude of them, and their most frequent reiteration; if the heart be not antecedently purified and sanctified, if it be not possessed with the principle of grace and holiness insisted on; Isa. i. 11—16. Such acts and duties may be the effects of other causes, the fruits of other principles. Mere legal convictions will produce them, and put men upon a course of them. Fears, afflictions, terrors of conscience, dictates of reason improved by education, and confirmed by custom, will direct, yea, compel men unto their observance. But all is lost, men do but labour in the fire about them, if the soul be not prepared with this spiritual principle of habitual holiness, wrought in it immediately by the Holy Ghost. Yet we must here observe these two things:

1. That so far as these duties, be they of morality or re-

ligion, of piety or divine worship, are good in themselves, they ought to be approved, and men encouraged in them. There are sundry ways, whereby the best duties may be abused and misapplied, as when men rest in them, as if they were meritorious, or the matter of their justification before God. For this, as is known, is an effectual means to divert the souls of sinners from faith in Christ for life and salvation; Rom. ix. 31, 32. x. 3, 4. And there are reasons and causes, that render them unacceptable before God, with respect unto the persons by whom they are performed; as when they are not done in faith, for which Cain's sacrifice was rejected; and when the heart is not previously sanctified and prepared with a spiritual principle of obedience. But yet, on neither of these grounds or pretences can we, or ought we to, condemn or undervalue the duties themselves, which are good in their own nature, nor take off men from the performance of them; yea, it were greatly to be desired, that we could see more of the fruits of moral virtues, and duties of religious piety, among unsanctified persons than we do. The world is not in a condition to spare the good acts of bad men. But this we may do, and as we are called we ought to do: when men are engaged in a course of duties and good works, on principles that will not abide and endure the trial, or for ends that will spoil and corrupt all they do, we may tell them (as our Saviour did the young man, who gave that great account of his diligence in all legal duties), 'one thing is yet wanting unto you;' you want faith, or you want Christ, or you want a spiritual principle of evangelical holiness, without which all you do will be lost, and come to no account at the last day. The due assertion of grace never was, nor ever can be, an obstruction unto any duty of obedience. Indeed, when any will give up themselves unto such works or actings, under the name of duties and obedience unto God, which, although they may make a specious show and appearance in the world, yet are evil in themselves, or such as God requireth not of men, we may speak against them, deny them, and take men off from them. So persecution hath been looked on as a good work, men supposing they did God good service when they slew the disciples of Christ; and men giving their goods unto pious uses, as they were called (indeed impious abuses), to have others

pray for their souls, and expiate their sins, when they were gone out of this world. These, and the like other innumerable pretended duties, may be judged, condemned, exploded, without the least fear of deterring men from obedience.

2. That wherever there is this principle of holiness in the *heart*, in those that are *adult*, there will be the fruits and effects of it in the *life*, in all duties of righteousness, godliness, and holiness. For the main work and end of this principle is, to enable us to comply with that grace of God, which teacheth 'us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world;' Tit. ii. 11, 12. That which we press for, is the great direction of our Saviour, make 'the tree good, and the fruit will be so also.' And there can be no more vile and sordid hypocrisy, than for any to pretend unto inward habitual sanctification, whilst their lives are barren in the fruits of righteousness and duties of obedience. Wherever this root is, there it will assuredly bear fruit.

Secondly, It will appear from hence, whence it is that men propose and steer such various courses with respect unto *holiness*. All men who profess themselves to be Christians, are agreed, in words at least, that holiness is absolutely necessary unto them that would be saved by Jesus Christ. To deny it, is all one as openly to renounce the gospel. But when they should come to the practice of it, some take one false way, some another, and some actually despise and reject it. Now all this ariseth from ignorance of the true nature of evangelical holiness on the one hand, and love of sin on the other. There is nothing wherein we are spiritually and eternally concerned, that is more frequently insisted on, than is the true nature of sanctification and holiness. But the thing itself, as hath been declared, is deep and mysterious, not to be understood without the aid of spiritual light in our minds. Hence some would have moral virtue to be holiness, which, as they suppose, they can understand by their own reason, and practise in their own strength, and I heartily wish that we could see more of the fruits of it from them. But real moral virtue will hardly be abased into an opposition unto grace; the pretence of it will be so easily, and is so every day. Some, on the other hand, place all holiness in superstitious devotions, in the strict

observance of religious duties, which men and not God have appointed. And there is no end of their multiplication of them, nor measure of the strictness of some in them. The reason why men give up themselves unto such soul-deceiving imaginations, is, their ignorance and hatred of that only true real principle of evangelical holiness which we have discoursed. For what the world knoweth not in these things it always hateth. And they cannot discern it clearly, or in its own light and evidence; for it must be spiritually discerned. This the natural man cannot do; 1 Cor. ii. 14. And in that false light of corrupted reason, wherein they discern and judge it, they esteem it foolishness or fancy. There is not a more foolish and fanatical thing in the world with many, than that internal habitual holiness which we are in the consideration of. And hence are they led to despise and to hate it. But here the love of sin secretly takes place, and influenceth their minds. This universal change of the soul in all its principles of operation into the image and likeness of God, tending to the extirpation of all sins and vicious habits, is that which men fear and abhor. This makes them take up with morality and superstitious devotion, any thing that will pacify a natural conscience, and please themselves or others with a reputation of religion. It is, therefore, highly incumbent on all that would not wilfully deceive their own souls unto their eternal ruin, to inquire diligently into the true nature of evangelical holiness, and above all, to take care that they miss it not in the foundation, in the true root and principle of it, wherein a mistake will be pernicious.

Thirdly, It is, moreover, evident from hence, that it is a greater matter to be *truly and really holy,* than most persons are aware of. We may learn eminently, how great and excellent a work this of sanctification and holiness is, from the causes of it. How emphatically doth our apostle ascribe it unto God even the Father; 1 Thess. v. 23. 'Even the God of peace himself sanctify you.' It is so great a work, as that it cannot be wrought by any but the God of peace himself. What is the immediate work of the Spirit therein, what the influence of the mediation and blood of Christ into it, hath been already in part declared, and we have yet much more to add in our account of it. And these things do sufficiently manifest, how great, how excellent, and glorious a work it is. For

it doth not become divine and infinite wisdom, to engage the immediate power and efficacy of such glorious causes and means, for the producing of any ordinary or common effect. It must be somewhat as of great importance unto the glory of God, so of an eminent nature in itself. And that little entrance which we have made into an inquiry after its nature, manifests how great and excellent it is. Let us not, therefore, deceive ourselves with the shadows and appearances of things in a few duties of piety, or righteousness; no, nor yet with many of them, if we find not this great work at least begun in us. It is sad to see what trifling there is in these things amongst men. None, indeed, are contented to be without a religion, and very few are willing to admit it in its power.

Fourthly, Have we *received* this principle of holiness, and of spiritual life, by the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost; there are, among many others, *three duties* incumbent on us, whereof we ought to be as careful as of our souls. And the first is, carefully and diligently by all means to cherish and preserve it in our hearts. This sacred *depositum* of the new creature, of the divine nature, is intrusted with us, to take care of, to cherish and improve. If we willingly, or through our neglect, suffer it to be wounded by temptations, weakened by corruptions, or not exercised in all known duties of obedience, our guilt is great, and our trouble will not be small. And then, secondly, it is equally incumbent on us, to evidence and manifest it by its fruits in the mortification of corrupt lusts and affections, in all duties of holiness, righteousness, charity, and piety, in the world. For that God may be glorified hereby, is one of the ends why he endues our natures with it. And without these visible fruits, we expose our entire profession of holiness to reproach. And in like manner is it required, that we be *thankful* for what we have received.

Secondly, As this principle of inherent grace or holiness hath the nature of a habit, so also hath it the *properties* thereof. And the first property of a habit, is, that it inclines and disposeth the subject wherein it is, unto acts of its own kind, or suitable unto it. It is directed unto a certain end, and inclines unto acts or actions which tend thereunto, and that with evenness and constancy. Yea, moral habits are nothing

but strong and firm dispositions and inclinations unto moral acts and duties of their own kind; as righteousness, or temperance, or meekness. Such a disposition and inclination, therefore, there must be in this new spiritual nature, or principle of holiness, which we have described, wherewith the souls of believers are inlaid and furnished by the Holy Ghost in their sanctification. For,

1. It hath a *certain end,* to enable us whereunto it is bestowed on us. Although it be a great work in itself, that wherein the renovation of the image of God in us doth consist, yet is it not wrought in any but with respect unto a farther end in this world. And this end is, that we may live to God; we are made like unto God, that we may live unto God. By the depravation of our natures, we are 'alienated from this life of God,' this divine spiritual life; Eph. iv. 18. we like it not, but we have an aversion unto it. Yea, we are under the power of a death, that is universally opposed unto that life; 'for to be carnally minded is death;' Rom. viii. 6. that is, it is so with respect unto the life of God, and all the acts that belong thereunto. And this life of God hath two parts. (1.) The *outward duties* of it. (2.) The *inward frame* and actings of it. For the first; persons under the power of corrupted nature may perform them, and do so, but without delight, constancy, or permanency. The language of that principle whereby they are acted is, 'Behold what a weariness it is;' Mal. i. 13. and such hypocrites will not pray always. But as to the second, for the internal actings of faith and love, whereby all outward duties shall be quickened and animated, they are utter strangers unto them, utterly alienated from them. With respect unto this life of God, a life of spiritual obedience unto God, are our natures thus spiritually renewed, or furnished with this spiritual habit and principle of grace. It is wrought in us, that by virtue thereof we may 'live to God,' without which we cannot do so in any one single act or duty whatever. For, they that are in the flesh cannot please God; Rom. viii. 8. Wherefore, the first property and inseparable adjunct of it is, that it inclineth and disposeth the soul wherein it is, unto all acts and duties that belong to the life of God, or unto all the duties of holy obedience, so that it shall attend unto them, not from conviction or external impression only, but from an internal

genuine principle so inclining and disposing them thereunto. And these things may be illustrated by what is contrary unto them. There is in the state of nature a carnal mind; which is the principle of all moral and spiritual operations, in them in whom it is; and this carnal mind hath an enmity, or is enmity, against God; 'it is not subject unto the law of God, neither indeed can be;' Rom. viii. 7. that is, the bent and inclination of it lies directly against spiritual things, or the mind and will of God, in all things which concern a life of obedience unto himself. Now as this principle of holiness is that which is introduced into our souls in opposition unto, and to the exclusion of, the carnal mind; so this disposition and inclination of it, is opposite and contrary unto the enmity of the carnal mind, as tending always unto actions spiritually good, according to the mind of God.

2, This *disposition* of heart and soul, which I place as the first property or effect of the principle of holiness, before declared and explained, is in the Scripture called, *fear, love, delight*, and by the names of such other affections as express a constant regard and inclination unto their objects. For these things do not denote the principle of holiness itself, which is seated in the mind, or understanding, and will, whereas they are the names of affections only; but they signify the first way whereby that principle doth act itself in a holy inclination of the heart unto spiritual obedience. So when the people of Israel had engaged themselves by solemn covenant, to hear and do whatsoever God commanded, God adds concerning it, 'O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always;' Deut. v. 29. that is, that the bent and inclinations of their hearts were always unto obedience. It is that which is intended in the promise of the covenant; Jer. xxxii. 39. 'I will give them one heart, that they may fear me,' which is the same with the new spirit; Ezek. xi. 19. The new heart, as hath been declared, is the new nature, the new creature, the new spiritual supernatural principle of holiness. The first effect, the first fruit hereof is, the fear of God always, or a new spiritual bent and inclination of soul unto all the will and commands of God. And this new spirit, this fear of God, is still expressed as the inseparable consequent of the new heart, or the writing of the law of God in our

hearts, which are the same. So it is called, 'fearing the Lord and his goodness;' Hos. iii. 5. In like manner it is expressed by love, which is the inclination of the soul unto all acts of obedience unto God and communion with him, with delight and complacency. It is a regard unto God and his will, with a reverence due unto his nature, and a delight in him suited unto that covenant-relation wherein he stands unto us.

3. It is, moreover, expressed by being *spiritually minded:* 'to be spiritually minded is life and peace;' Rom. viii. 6. that is, the bent and inclination of the mind unto spiritual things, is that whereby we live to God, and enjoy peace with him, 'it is life and peace.' By nature we savour only the things of the flesh, and mind earthly things; Phil. iii. 19. our minds or hearts are set upon them, disposed towards them, ready for all things that lead us to the enjoyment of them, and satisfaction in them. But, hereby we mind the things that are above, or set our affections on them; Col. iii. 3. By virtue hereof David professeth, that his soul followed hard after God; Psal. lxiii. 8. or inclined earnestly unto all those ways whereby he might live unto him, and come unto the enjoyment of him: like the earnestness which is in him who is in the pursuit of something continually in his eye, as our apostle expresseth it; Phil. iii. 13, 14. By the apostle Peter it is compared unto that natural inclination which is in those that are hungry unto food; 1 Pet. ii. 2. 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby;' which is a constant unalterable inclination.

This, therefore, is that which I intend. Every nature hath its disposition unto actings suitable unto it. The principle of holiness is such a nature, a new or divine nature; wherever it is, it constantly inclines the soul unto duties and acts of holiness; it produceth a constant disposition unto them. And as by the principle itself, the contrary principle of sin and flesh is impaired and subdued, so by this gracious disposition, the inclination unto sin which is in us, is weakened, impaired, and gradually taken away.

Wherefore, wherever this holiness is, it doth dispose or incline the whole soul unto acts and duties of holiness: and that, (1.) *Universally,* or impartially. (2.) *Constantly,* or evenly.

(3.) *Permanently,* unto the end. And where these things are not, no multiplication of duties will either make or denominate any person holy.

(1.) There is *no duty of holiness whatever,* but there is a *disposition* in a sanctified heart unto it. There is a respect unto all God's commands. Some of them may be more contrary unto our natural inclinations than others, some more cross unto our present secular interests, some attended with more difficulties and disadvantages than others; and some may be rendered very hazardous by the circumstances of times and seasons. But, however, if there be a gracious principle in our hearts, it will equally incline and dispose us unto every one of them in its proper place and season. And the reason hereof is, because it being a new nature, it equally inclines unto all that belongs unto it, as all acts of holy obedience do. For every nature hath an equal propensity unto all its natural operations, in their times and seasons. Hence our Saviour tried the rich young man, who gave an account of his duties and righteousness, with one that lay close unto his secular interests and worldly satisfactions. This immediately carried him off, and evidenced that all he had done besides, was not from an internal principle of spiritual life. Any other principle or cause of duties and obedience, will, upon solicitations, give way unto an habitual reserve of one thing or other that is contrary thereunto. It will admit either of the omission of some duties, or of the commission of some sin, or of the retaining of some lust. So Naaman, who vowed obedience upon his conviction of the power of the God of Israel, would, nevertheless, upon the solicitation of his worldly interest, have a reserve to bow in the house of Rimmon. So omissions of duties that are dangerous, in a way of profession, or the reserve of some corrupt affections, love of the world, pride of life, will be admitted upon any other principle of obedience, and that habitually. For even those who have this real spiritual principle of holiness, may be surprised into actual omission of duties, commission of sins, and a temporary indulgence unto corrupt affections. But habitually they cannot be so. An habitual reserve for any thing that is sinful or morally evil, is eternally inconsistent with this principle of holiness. Light and darkness, fire

and water, may as soon be reconciled in one. And hereby is it distinguished from all other principles, reasons, or causes, whereon men may perform any duties of obedience towards God.

(2.) It thus disposeth the heart unto duties of holiness *constantly and evenly*. He in whom it is feareth always, or is in the fear of the Lord all the day long. In all instances, on all occasions, it equally disposeth the mind unto acts of holy obedience. It is true, that the actings of grace which proceed from it, are in us sometimes more intense and vigorous than at other times. It is so also, that we are ourselves sometimes more watchful, and diligently intent on all occasions of acting grace, whether in solemn duties, or in our general course, or on particular occasions, than we are at some other times. Moreover, there are especial seasons wherein we meet with greater difficulties and obstructions from our lusts and temptations than ordinary, whereby this holy disposition is intercepted, and impeded. But notwithstanding all these things, which are contrary unto it, and obstructive of its operations, in itself and its own nature, it doth constantly and evenly, incline the soul at all times and on all occasions, unto duties of holiness. Whatever falls out otherwise, is accidental unto it. This disposition is like a stream that ariseth equally from a living fountain, as our Saviour expresseth it; John iv. 14. 'A well of water springing up into everlasting life.' As this stream passeth in its course it may meet with oppositions, that may either stop it or divert it for a season; but its waters still press forward continually. Hereby doth the soul set God always before him, and walk continually as in his sight. Men may perform duties of obedience unto God, yea, many of them, yea, be engaged into a constant course of them, as to their outward performance, on other grounds, from other principles, and by virtue of other motives. But whatever they are, they are not a new nature in and unto the soul, and so do not dispose men constantly and evenly unto what they lead unto. Sometimes their impressions on the mind are strong and violent, there is no withstanding of them, but the duties they require must instantly be complied withal. So is it when convictions are excited by dangers or afflictions, strong desires, or the like. And again, they leave the soul

unto its own formality and course, without the least impression from them towards any duties whatever. There is no cause nor principle, or reason of obedience, besides this one insisted on, that will evenly and constantly incline unto the acts of it. Men proceeding only upon the power of convictions, are like those at sea, who sometimes meet with storms or vehement winds which fit them for their course, and would seem immediately to drive them as it were with violence into their port or harbour, but quickly after they have an utter calm, no breath of air stirs to help them forward; and then, it may be, after a while another gust of wind befalls them, which they again suppose will dispatch their voyage; but that also quickly fails them. Where this principle is, persons have a natural current which carries them on quickly, evenly, and constantly; and although they may sometimes meet with storms, tempests, and cross winds, yet the stream, the current, which is natural, at length worketh its way, and holds on its course through all external occasional impediments.

(3.) It is also *permanent* herein, and abideth for ever. It will never *cease inclining*, and disposing, the whole soul unto acts and duties of obedience, until it comes unto the end of them all in the enjoyment of God. It is living water, and whosoever drinketh of it, shall never thirst any more, that is, with a total indigence of supplies of grace, but it 'is a well of water springing up into everlasting life;' John iv. 14. It springs up, and that as always without intermission, because it is living water from which vital acts are inseparable, so permanently without ceasing, it springs up into everlasting life, and faileth not until those in whom it is, are safely lodged in the enjoyment of it. This is expressly promised in the covenant. 'I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me;' Jer. xxxii. 40. They shall never do so in whom is this fear, which is permanent and endless. It is true, that it is our duty, with all care and diligence, in the use of all means, to preserve, cherish, and improve both the principle itself, and its actings in these holy dispositions. We are to 'shew all diligence unto the full assurance of hope unto the end;' Heb. vi. 11. And in the use of means, and the exercise of grace is it, that it is infallibly kept and preserved; Isa. xl. 31. And it is also true,

that sometimes, in some persons, upon the fierce interpositions of temptations, with the violent and deceitful working of lusts, the principle itself may seem for a season to be utterly stifled, and this property of it to be destroyed; as it seems to have been with David under his sad fall and decay. Yet such is the nature of it, that it is immortal, everlasting, and which shall never absolutely die; such is the relation of it unto the covenant-faithfulness of God, and mediation of Christ, as that it shall never utterly cease or be extinguished. It abideth disposing and inclining the heart unto all duties of holy obedience unto the grave. Yea ordinarily, and where its genuine work and tendency is not interrupted by cursed negligence or love of the world, it thrives and grows continually unto the end. Hence, some are not only fruitful, but fat and flourishing in their old age, and as the outward man decayeth, so in them the inward man is daily renewed in strength and power. But as unto all other principles of obedience whatever, as it is in their own nature to decay and wither, all their actings growing insensibly weaker and less efficacious, so for the most part either the increase of carnal wisdom, or the love of the world, or some powerful temptations at one time or other put an utter end unto them, and they are of no use at all. Hence there is not a more secure generation of sinners in the world, than those who have been acted by the power of conviction unto a course of obedience in the performance of many duties. And those of them who fall not openly to profaneness or lasciviousness, or neglect of all duties of religion, do continue in their course, from what they have been habituated unto, finding it compliant with their present circumstances and conditions in the world, as also having been preserved from such ways and practices as are inconsistent with their present course by the power of their former convictions. But the power of these principles, of conviction, education, impressions from afflictions, dangers, fears, all in one, die before men, and if their eyes were open, they might see the end of them.

In this manner, therefore, doth the new divine nature that is in believers, dispose and incline them, impartially, evenly, and permanently, unto all acts and duties of holy obedience.

One thing yet remains to be cleared, that there may be

no mistake in this matter. And this is, that in those, who are thus constantly inclined and disposed unto all the acts of a heavenly spiritual life, there are yet remaining contrary dispositions and inclinations also.

There are yet in them inclinations and dispositions to sin, proceeding from the *remainders* of a contrary habitual principle. This the Scripture calls the 'flesh,' 'lust,' 'the sin that dwelleth in us,' 'the body of death;' being what yet remaineth in believers of that vicious, corrupted, depravation of our nature, which came upon us by the loss of the image of God, disposing the whole soul unto all that is evil. This yet continueth in them, inclining them unto evil, and all that is so, according to the power and efficacy that is remaining unto it in various degrees. Sundry things are here observable; as, (1.) This is that which is *singular* in this life of God. There are in the same mind, will, and affections, namely, of a person regenerate, contrary habits and inclinations, continually opposing one another, and acting adversely about the same objects and ends. And this is not from any jarrings or disorder between the distinct faculties of the soul itself, as in natural men there are adverse actings between their wills and affections, on the one hand bent unto sin, and the light of their minds and consciences on the other, prohibiting the committing of sin, and condemning its commission, which disorder is discernible in the light of nature, and is sufficiently canvassed by the old philosophers. But these contrary habits, inclinations, and actings, are in the same faculties. (2.) As this cannot be apprehended but by virtue of a *previous conviction* and acknowledgment, both of the total corruption of our nature by the fall, and the initial renovation of it by Jesus Christ, wherein these contrary habits and dispositions do consist, so it cannot be denied without an open rejecting of the gospel, and contradiction to the experience of all that do believe, or know any thing of what it is to live to God. We intend no more but what the apostle so plainly asserts; Gal. v. 17. 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh;' that is, in the mind, will, and affections of believers, 'and these are contrary the one unto the other;' they are contrary principles attended with contrary inclinations and actings, 'so that ye cannot do the

things that ye would.' (3.) There cannot be *contrary habits*, merely natural or moral, in the same subject, with respect unto the same object, at the same time; at least they cannot be so in any high degree, so as to incline and act contrary one to another with urgency or efficacy. For violent inclinations unto sin, and a conscience fiercely condemning for sin, whereby sinners are sometimes torn and even distracted, are not contrary habits in the same subject. Only conscience brings in from without the judgment of God, against what the will and affections are bent upon.

But it is, as was said, otherwise in the contrary principles or *habits* of spirit and flesh, of grace and sin, with their adverse inclinations and actings. Only they cannot be in the highest degree at the same time, nor be actually prevalent or predominant in the same instances. That is, sin and grace cannot bear rule in the same heart at the same time, so as that it should be equally under the conduct of them both. Nor can they have in the same soul contrary inclinations equally efficacious; for then would they absolutely obstruct all sorts of operations whatever. Nor have they the same influence into particular actions, so as that they should not be justly denominated from one of them, either gracious or sinful. But by nature, the vicious, depraved, habit of sin, or the flesh, is wholly predominant and universally prevalent, constantly disposing and inclining the soul to sin. Hence 'all the imaginations of men's hearts are evil, and that continually:' and, 'they that are in the flesh cannot please God.' There dwelleth no good thing in them, nor can they do any thing that is good; and the flesh is able generally to subdue the rebellions of light, convictions, and conscience, against it. But, upon the introduction of the new principle of grace and holiness in our sanctification, this habit of sin is weakened, impaired, and so disenabled, as that it cannot, nor shall incline unto sin, with that constancy and prevalency as formerly, nor press unto it ordinarily with the same urgency and violence. Hence in the Scripture it is said to be dethroned by grace, so as that it shall not reign or lord it over us, by hurrying us into the pursuit of its uncontrollable inclinations; Rom. vi. 12. Concerning these things the reader may consult my treatises of the 'remainder of indwelling sin,' and the 'mortification of it in believers.'

But so it is, that this flesh, this principle of sin, however it may be dethroned, corrected, impaired, and disabled, yet is it never wholly and absolutely dispossessed and cast out of the soul in this life. There it will remain, and there it will work, seduce, and tempt, more or less, according as its remaining strength and advantages are. By reason hereof, and the opposition that hence ariseth against it, the principle of grace and holiness cannot, nor doth perfectly and absolutely, incline the heart and soul unto the life of God, and the acts thereof, so as that they in whom it is, should be sensible of no opposition made thereunto, or of no contrary motions and inclinations unto sin. For, the flesh will lust against the spirit, as well as the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary. This is the analogy that is between these two states. In the state of nature, the principle of sin, or the flesh, is predominant and bears rule in the soul, but there is a light remaining in the mind, and a judgment in the conscience, which being heightened with instructions and convictions do continually oppose it, and condemn sin both before and after its commission. In them that are regenerate it is the principle of grace and holiness that is predominant and beareth rule: but there is in them still a principle of lust and sin, which rebels against the rule of grace, much in the proportion that light and convictions rebel against the rule of sin in the unregenerate. For as they hinder men from doing many evils, which their ruling principle of sin strongly inclines them unto, and puts them on many duties that it likes not; so do these on the other side in them that are regenerate: they hinder them from doing many good things which their ruling principle inclines unto, and carry them into many evils which it doth abhor.

But this belongs unto the principle of holiness, inseparably and necessarily; that it inclineth and disposeth the soul wherein it is, universally unto all acts of holy obedience. And these inclinations are predominant unto any other, and keep the soul pointed to holiness continually. This belongs unto its nature, and where there is a cessation or interruption in these inclinations, it is from the prevailing reaction of the principle of sin, it may be, advantaged by outward temptations and incentives, which a holy soul will constantly contend against. Where this is not, there is no

holiness. The performance of duties, whether of religious worship, or of morality, how frequently, sedulously, and usefully soever, will denominate no man holy, unless his whole soul be disposed and possessed with prevalent inclinations unto all that is spiritually good, from the principle of the image of God renewed in him. Outward duties of what sort soever, may be multiplied upon light and conviction, when they spring from no root of grace in the heart, and that which so riseth up will quickly wither; Matt. xiii. And this free, genuine, unforced inclination of the mind and soul, evenly and universally unto all that is spiritually good, unto all acts and duties of holiness, with an inward labouring to break through and to be quit of all opposition, is the first fruit and most pregnant evidence of the renovation of our natures by the Holy Ghost.

It may be inquired, Whence it is (if the habit or inherent principle of holiness do so constantly incline the soul unto all duties of holiness and obedience), that David prays, that *God would incline his heart unto his testimonies;* Psal. cxix. 36. For it should seem from hence to be a *new act* of grace that is required thereunto, and that it doth not spring from the *habit* mentioned, which was then eminent in the psalmist.

Ans. 1. I shall shew afterward, that notwithstanding all the power and efficacy of *habitual grace*, yet there is required a *new act* of the Holy Spirit by his grace, unto its actual exercise in particular *instances*. 2. God inclines our hearts to duties and obedience, principally by *strengthening*, *increasing*, and *exciting*, the grace we have *received*, and which is inherent in us. But we neither have, nor ever shall have in this world, such a stock of spiritual strength, as to do any thing as we ought, without renewed co-operations of grace.

Thirdly, There is *power* accompanying this habit of grace, as well as *propensity* or *inclination*. It doth not merely dispose the soul to holy obedience, but enables it unto the acts and duties of it. Our living unto God, our walking in his ways and statutes, keeping his judgments, which things express our whole actual obedience, are the effects of the new heart that is given unto us, whereby we are enabled unto them; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. But this must be somewhat farther and distinctly declared. And, 1. I shall shew, that there is such a *power* of holy obedience in all that have the prin-

ciple of holiness wrought in them by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, which is inseparable from it; and, 2. shew, what that *power* is, or wherein it doth consist.

That by nature we have *no power* unto, or for, any thing that is spiritually good, or to any acts or duties of evangelical holiness, hath been sufficiently proved before. 'When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly;' Rom. v. 6. Until we are made partakers of the benefits of the death of Christ, in and by his sanctifying grace, as we 'are ungodly,' so we are 'without strength,' or have no power to live to God. But, as was said, this hath been formerly, fully, and largely confirmed in our declaration of the impotency of our nature by reason of its death in sin, and so need not here to be farther insisted on.

1. The present assertion which we are to prove is, That there is in and by the grace of regeneration and sanctification, *a power and ability given unto us of living unto God*, or performing all the duties of acceptable obedience. This is the first act of that spiritual habit, arising out of it and inseparable from it. It is called 'strength' or 'power;' Isa. xl. 31. 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;' that is, for and unto obedience, or walking with God without weariness; strength they have, and in their walking with God it is renewed or increased. By the same grace are we 'strengthened with all might, according to the glorious power of God;' Col. i. 11. or 'strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;' Eph. iii. 16. whereby we 'can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us;' Phil. iv. 13. In our calling or conversion to God, all things are given unto us by his 'divine power which pertain unto life and godliness;' 2 Pet. i. 3. every thing that is needful to enable us unto a holy life. The habit and principle of grace that is wrought in believers, gives them new power and spiritual strength unto all duties of obedience. The water of the Spirit therein, is not only a 'well of water' abiding in them, but it 'springeth up into everlasting life;' John iv. 14. or enables us continually to such gracious actings as have a tendency thereunto. There is a sufficiency in the grace of God bestowed on them that believe, to enable them unto the obedience required of them. So God told our apostle, when he was ready to faint under his temptations, that 'his grace

was sufficient for him;' 2 Cor. xii. 9. or there is a power in all that are sanctified, whereby they are able to yield all holy obedience unto God. They are alive unto God, alive to righteousness and holiness. They have a principle of spiritual life; and where there is life, there is power in its kind and for its end. Whence there is not in our sanctification only a principle or inherent habit of grace bestowed on us, whereby we really and habitually, as to state and condition, differ from all unregenerate persons whatever, but there belongs moreover thereunto, an active power, or an ability for and unto spiritual holy obedience, which none are partakers of but those who are so sanctified. And unto this power there is a respect in all the commands or precepts of obedience, that belong to the new covenant. The commands of each covenant respect the power given in and by it. Whatever God required or doth require of any, by virtue of the old covenant or the precepts thereof, it was on the account of, and proportionate unto, the strength given under and by that covenant. And that we have lost that strength by the entrance of sin, exempts us not from the authority of the command; and thence it is that we are righteously obliged to do, what we have no power to perform. So also the command of God under the new covenant, as to all that obedience which he requireth of us, respects that power which is given and communicated unto us thereby. And this is that power which belongs unto the new creature, the habit and principle of grace and holiness, which as we have proved, is wrought by the Holy Ghost in all believers.

2. We may, therefore, inquire into the *nature* of this *spiritual power*, what it is, and wherein it doth consist. Now this cannot be clearly understood without a due consideration of that impotency unto all spiritual good which is in us by nature, which it cures and takes away. This we have before at large declared, and thither the reader is referred. When we know what it is to be without power or strength in spiritual things, we may thence learn what it is to have them: to this purpose we may consider, that there are three things or faculties in our souls, which are the subject of all power or impotency in spiritual things; namely, our understandings, wills, and affections. That our spiritual impotency ariseth from their depravation hath been proved before; and what power

we have for holy spiritual obedience, it must consist in some especial ability communicated distinctly unto all these faculties. And our inquiry therefore is, what is this power in the mind, what in the will, and what in the affections. And,

(1.) This *power* in the mind consists in a *spiritual light* and *ability* to discern *spiritual* things in a *spiritual* manner, which men in the state of nature are utterly devoid of; 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14. The Holy Spirit, in the first communication of the principle of spiritual life and holiness, shines into our hearts, to 'give us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;' 2 Cor. iv. 6. yea, this strengthening of the mind by saving illumination, is the most eminent act of our sanctification. Without this there is a veil, with fear and bondage upon us, that we cannot see into spiritual things. But where the Spirit of God is, where he comes with his sanctifying grace, there is liberty; and thereby we all 'with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory;' 2 Cor. iii. 18. See Eph. i. 17, 18.

Wherefore, all sanctified believers have an ability and power in the renewed mind and understanding, to see, know, discern, and receive, spiritual things, the mysteries of the gospel, the mind of Christ, in a due and spiritual manner. It is true, they have not all of them this power and ability in the same degree; but every one of them hath a sufficiency of it, so as to discern what concerns themselves and their duties necessarily. Some of them seem indeed to be very low in knowledge, and in comparison of others very ignorant. For there are different degrees in these things; Eph. iv. 7. And some of them are kept in that condition by their own negligence and sloth. They do not use as they ought, nor improve those means of growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which God prescribes unto them; as Heb. vi. 14—16. But every one who is truly sanctified, and who thereby hath received the least degree of saving grace, hath light enough to understand the spiritual things of the gospel in a spiritual manner. When the mysteries of the gospel are preached unto believers, some of them may be so declared as that those of meaner capacities and abilities may not be able to comprehend aright the doctrine of them, which yet is necessary to be so

proposed for the edification of those who are more grown in knowledge. Nevertheless, there is not any the meanest of them, but hath a spiritual insight into the things themselves intended, so far as they are necessary unto their faith and obedience in the condition wherein they are. This the Scripture gives such abundant testimony unto, as to render it unquestionable. For we have 'received the Spirit of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God.' By virtue of what we have received, we know or discern spiritual things; 1 Cor. ii. 12. So we 'know the mind of Christ;' ver. 15. This is the substance of that double testimony; 1 John ii. 20. 27. This abiding unction is no other but that habitual inherent grace which we plead for, and by it, as it is a holy light in our mind, we know all things; the understanding that is given us to know him that is true; 1 John v. 20. Only it is their duty continually to endeavour the improvement and enlargement of the light they have, in the daily exercise of the spiritual power they have received, and in the use of means; Heb. v. ult.

(2.) This *power* in the will consists in its *liberty, freedom,* and *ability,* to consent unto, choose, and embrace *spiritual* things. Believers have free-will unto that which is spiritually good. For they are freed from that bondage and slavery unto sin which they were under in the state of nature: whatever some dispute concerning the nature of free-will, that it consists in an indifferency unto good or evil, one thing or another, with a power of applying itself unto all its operations, whatever their objects be, as the Scripture knoweth nothing of it, so it is that which we cannot have, and if we could, it would be no advantage at all unto us, yea we had much better be without it. Have it indeed we cannot, for a supposition of it includes a rejection of all our dependance on God, making all the springs of our actions to be absolutely and formally in ourselves. Neither, considering the prejudices, temptations, and corruptions, that we are possessed and exercised with, would such a flexibility of will be of any use or advantage unto us, but would rather certainly give us up to the power of sin and Satan. All that the Scripture knows about free-will, is, that, in the state of nature, antecedent unto the converting sanctifying work of the Spirit, all men whatever are in bondage unto

sin, and that in all the faculties of their souls. They are sold under sin, are not 'subject unto the law of God, nor can be;' can neither think, nor will, nor do, nor desire, nor love any thing that is spiritually good, according to the mind of God. But as unto what is evil, perverse, unclean, that they are free and open unto, ready for, prone, and inclined, and every way able to do. On the other side, in those who are renewed by the Holy Ghost and sanctified, it acknowledgeth and teacheth a freedom of will, not in an indifferency and flexibility unto good and evil, but in a power and ability to like, love, choose, and cleave unto God and his will in all things. The will is now freed from its bondage unto sin, and being enlarged by light and love, willeth and chooseth freely the things of God, having received spiritual power and ability so to do. It is the truth, that is, faith in the gospel, the doctrine of the truth, which is the means of this freedom. The 'truth that makes you free;' John viii. 32. And it is the Son of God by his Spirit who is the principal efficient cause of it. 'For if the Son make us free, then are we free indeed;' ver. 36. and otherwise we are not, whatever we pretend. And this freedom unto spiritual good we have not of ourselves in the state of nature; for if we have, then are we free indeed, and there would be no need that the Son should make us free.

The difference, therefore, about free-will, is reduced unto these heads: [1.] Whether there be a power in man, indifferently to determine himself, his choice and all his actings, to this or that, good or evil, one thing or another, independently on the will, power, and providence of God, and his disposal of all future events. This indeed we deny, as that which is inconsistent with the prescience, authority, decrees, and dominion of God; and as that which would prove certainly ruinous and destructive to ourselves. [2.] Whether there be in men unregenerate, not renewed by the Holy Ghost, a freedom, power, and ability, unto that which is spiritually good, or to believe and obey according to the mind and will of God. This also we deny, as that which is contrary to innumerable testimonies of Scripture, and absolutely destructive of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. [3.] Whether the freedom of will that is in believers, do consist in an indifferency and freedom from any determina-

tion only, with a power equally ready for good or evil, according as the will shall determine itself; or whether it consist in a gracious freedom and ability to choose, will, and do that which is spiritually good, in opposition to the bondage and slavery unto sin, wherein we were before detained. This last is that liberty and power of the will which we assert with the Scripture in persons that are sanctified. And a liberty this is every way consistent with all the operations of God, as the sovereign first cause of all things; every way compliant with, and an effect of, the special grace of God, and the operations of the Holy Ghost; a liberty whereby our obedience and salvation are secured, in answer to the promises of the covenant. And who, that understands himself, would change this real, useful, gracious free-will, given by Jesus Christ the Son of God, when he makes us free; and an effect of God's writing his law in our hearts, to cause us to walk in his statutes, that property of the new heart whereby it is able to consent unto, choose, and embrace freely, the things of God, for that fictitious imaginary freedom; yea, for if it were real, of an indifferency unto all things, and an equal power unto every thing, whether it be good or evil. I say then, that by the habit of grace and holiness infused into us by the Spirit of sanctification, the will is freed, enlarged, and enabled to answer the commands of God for obedience, according to the tenor of the new covenant. This is that freedom, this is that power of the will, which the Scripture reveals and regards, and which by all the promises and precepts of it we are obliged to use and exercise, and no other.

(3). The *affections*, which naturally are the principal servants and instruments of sin, are hereby engaged unto God; Deut. xxx. 6. And from what hath been thus far discoursed, the sense of our former assertion is evident, as also the nature of the principle of holiness insisted on.

The Holy Ghost, in our sanctification, doth work, effect, and create in us, a new, holy, spiritual, vital principle of grace, residing in all the faculties of our souls, according as their especial nature is capable thereof, after the manner of a permanent and prevalent habit, which he cherisheth, preserveth, increaseth, and strengtheneth continually, by effectual supplies of grace from Jesus Christ, disposing, inclining, and enabling

the whole soul unto all ways, acts, and duties of holiness, whereby we live to God; opposing, resisting, and finally conquering, whatever is opposite and contrary thereunto. This belongs essentially unto evangelical holiness, yea, herein doth the nature of it formally and radically consist. This is that from whence believers are denominated holy, and without which none are so, or can be so called.

Secondly, The properties of this power are *readiness* and *facility*. Wherever it is, it renders the soul ready unto all duties of holy obedience, and renders all duties of holy obedience easy unto the soul.

1. It gives *readiness*, by removing and taking away all those *encumbrances*, which the mind is apt to be clogged with and hindered by, from sin, the world, spiritual sloth, and unbelief. This is that which we are exhorted unto in a way of duty; Heb. xii. 1. Luke xii. 35. 1 Pet. i. 13. iv. 1. Eph. vi. 14. Herein is the Spirit ready, though the flesh be weak; Mark xiv. 35. And those encumbrances which give an unreadiness unto God, may be considered two ways. (1.) As they are in their *full power* and *efficacy*, in persons unregenerate; whence they are unto every *good work reprobate;* Tit. i. 13. Hence proceed all those prevalent tergiversations against a compliance with the will of God, and their own convictions, which bear sway in such persons. 'Yet a little slumber, a little sleep, a little folding of the hands to sleep;' Prov. vi. 10. By these do men so often put off the calls of God, and perniciously procrastinate from time to time a full compliance with their convictions. And whatever particular duties such persons do perform, yet are their hearts and minds never prepared or ready for them; but the encumbrances mentioned, do influence them into spiritual disorders in all that they do. (2.) These principles of *sloth* and *unreadiness*, do oft-times *partially* influence the minds of believers themselves unto great indispositions unto *spiritual* duties; so the spouse states her case; Cant. v. 2, 3. By reason of her circumstances in the world, she had an *unreadiness* for that converse and communion with Christ, which she was called unto. And it is so not unfrequently with the best of men in this world. A spiritual unreadiness unto holy duties, arising from the power of sloth or the occasions of life, is no small part of their sin and trouble. Both these are removed by

this spiritual power of the principle of life and holiness in believers. The total prevailing power of them, such as is in persons unregenerate, is broken by the first infusion of it into the soul, wherein it gives an habitual fitness and preparation of heart unto all duties of obedience unto God. And by various degrees it freeth believers from the remainders of the encumbrances, which they have yet to conflict with; and this it doth three ways. As, [1.] it weakeneth and taketh off the bent of the soul from earthly things, so as they shall not possess the mind as formerly; Col. iii. 2. How it doth this was declared before, and when this is done the mind is greatly eased of its burden, and some way ready unto its duty. [2.] It gives an insight into the beauty, the excellency, and glory of holiness, and all duties of obedience. This they see nothing of who being unsanctified, are under the power of their natural darkness. They can see no beauty in holiness, no form nor comeliness why it should be desired; and it is no wonder if they are unfree to the duties of it, which they are but as it were compelled unto. But the spiritual light wherewith this principle of grace is accompanied, discovers an excellency in holiness and the duties of it, and in the communion with God which we have thereby, so as greatly to incline the mind unto them, and prepare it for them. [3.] It causeth the affections to cleave and adhere unto them with delight. 'How do I love thy law,' saith David; 'my delight is in thy statutes, they are sweeter unto me than the honey-comb.' Where these three things concur, that the mind is freed from the powerful influences of carnal lusts and love of this world; where the beauty and excellency of holiness, and the duties of obedience, lie clear in the eyes of the soul; and where the affections cleave unto spiritual things as commanded, then will be that readiness in obedience which we inquire after.

2. It gives *facility* or easiness in the performance of all duties of obedience. Whatever men do from a habit, they do with some kind of easiness. That is easy to them which they are accustomed unto, though hard and difficult in itself. And what is done from nature, is done with facility. And the principle of grace, as we have shewed, is a new nature, an infused habit with respect unto the life of God, or all duties of holy obedience. I grant, there will be opposition

unto them even in the mind and heart itself, from sin, and Satan, and temptations of all sorts, yea, and they may sometimes arise so high, as either to defeat our purposes and intentions unto duties, or to clog us in them, to take off our chariot-wheels, and to make us drive heavily. But still it is in the nature of the principle of holiness to make the whole course of obedience and all the duties of it easy unto us, and to give us a facility in their performance. For, (1.) it introduceth a *suitableness* between our minds and the duties we are to perform. By it is the law written in our hearts; that is, there is an answerableness in them unto all that the law of God requires. In the state of nature, the great things of the law of God are a strange thing unto us; Hos. viii. 12. there is an enmity in our minds against them; Rom. viii. 7. There is no suitableness between our minds and them. But this is taken away by the principle of grace. Thereby do the mind and duty answer one another, as the eye and a lightsome body. Hence the commands of Christ are not grievous unto them in whom it is; 1 John v. 2. They do not appear to contain any thing uncouth, unreasonable, burdensome, or any way unsuited to that new nature whereby the soul is influenced and acted. Hence 'all the ways of wisdom are' unto believers, as they are in themselves, 'pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;' Prov. iii. 17.

The great notion of some in these days, is, about the *suitableness* of *Christian religion* unto *reason*. And to make good their assertion in the principal mysteries of it, because reason will not come to them, they bring them by violence unto their reason. But it is with respect unto this renewed principle, that there is a *suitableness* in any of the things of God unto our minds and affections. (2.) It keeps up the heart or whole person unto a *frequency* of all holy acts and duties. And frequency gives facility in every kind. It puts the soul upon reiterated actings of faith and love, or renewed holy thoughts and meditations. It is a spring that is continually bubbling up in them, on the frequent repetition of the daily duties of prayer, reading, holy discourse; as on closing with all opportunities and occasions of mercy, benignity, charity, and bounty amongst men. Hereby is the heart so accustomed unto the yoke of the Lord, and made so conversant in his ways, that it is natural and easy to it to

bear them, and to be engaged in them. And it will be found by experience, that the more intermissions of duties of any sort we fall under, the more difficulty we shall find in the performance of them. (3.) It engageth the *assistance* of *Christ* and his *Spirit*. It is the divine nature, the new creature, which the Lord Christ careth for; in and by its actings in all duties of obedience doth its life consist: therein also is it strengthened and improved. For this cause doth the Lord Christ continually come in by the supplies of his Spirit unto its assistance. And when the strength of Christ is engaged, then and there is his yoke easy, and his burden light.

Some, perhaps, will say, that they find not this facility or easiness in the course of obedience, and in the duties of it. They meet with secret unwillingnesses in themselves, and great oppositions on other accounts, whence they are apt to be faint and weary, yea, are almost ready to give over. It is hard to them to pray continually, and not to faint; to stand in their watch night and day, against the inroads of their spiritual adversaries, to keep themselves from the insinuations of the world, and up unto those sacrifices of charity and bounty, that are so well-pleasing to God: many weights and burdens are upon them in their course; many difficulties press them, and they are ready to be beset round about every moment. Wherefore, they think that the principle of grace and holiness, doth not give the facility and easiness mentioned, or that they were never made partakers of it.

I answer, 1. Let these persons *examine* themselves, and duly consider, whence these obstructions and difficulties they complain of do *arise:* if they are from the *inward* inclinations of their souls, and unwillingness to bear the *yoke of Christ*, only they are kept up unto it by their convictions which they cannot cast off, then is their condition to be bewailed. But if themselves are sensible and convinced, that they arise from principles, which, as far as they are within them, they hate and abhor, and long to be freed from, and as they are from without, are such as they look on as enemies unto them, and do watch against them; then what they complain of is no more, but what, in one degree or other, all that believe have experience of. And if their impediments do arise from what they know themselves to be opposite unto them, and that principle whereby they are

acted, then, notwithstanding this objection, it may be in the nature of the principle of holiness, to give facility in all the duties of it.

2. Let inquiry be made, whether they have been *constant* and *assiduous* in the performance of all those duties, which they now complain that they find so much difficulty in. The principle of grace and holiness, gives facility in all duties of obedience, but in the proper way and order. It first gives constancy and assiduity, and then easiness: if men comply not with its guidance and inclination in the former, it is in vain for them to expect the latter. If we are not constant in all acts of obedience, none of them will ever be easy unto us. Let not those who can omit proper and due seasons of meditation, prayer, hearing, charity, moderation in all things, patience, meekness, and the like, at their pleasure, on the least occasions, excuses, or diversions, ever think or hope to have the ways of obedience smooth, its paths pleasant, or its duties easy. Let him never think to attain any readiness, delight, or facility in any art or science, who is always beginning at it, touching upon it sometimes. As this is the way in all sorts of things natural and spiritual, to be always learning, and never to come to the knowledge of the truth; so, in the practice of holy obedience, if men are, as it were, always beginning, one while performing, another intermitting, the duties of it, fearing, or being unwilling, to engage into a constant, equal, assiduous discharge of them, they will be always striving, but never come unto any readiness or facility in them.

3. The difficulty and burdensomeness complained of, may proceed from the interposition of *perplexing temptations*, which weary, disquiet, and distract the mind. This may be, and frequently is so, and yet our assertion not impeached. We only say, that set aside extraordinary occasions, and sinful neglects, this principle of grace and holiness doth give that *suitableness* to the mind unto all duties of obedience, that *constancy* in them, that *love* unto them, as make them both *easy* and *pleasant*.

By these things we may inquire after the *habit* or principle of holiness in our own minds, that we be not deceived by any thing that falsely pretendeth thereunto. As,

1. Let us take heed, that we *deceive* not ourselves, as

though it would suffice unto gospel holiness, that we have *occasionally good purposes* of leaving sin and living unto God, then when something urgeth upon us more than ordinary, with the effects which such purposes will produce. Afflictions, sicknesses, troubles, sense of great guilt, fear of death, and the like, do usually produce this frame. And although it is most remote from any pretence unto evangelical obedience, yet I could not but give a caution against it, because it is that whereby the generality of men in the world do delude themselves into eternal ruin. It is rare to find any that are so stubbornly profligate, but at one time or another, they project and design, yea, promise and engage unto a change of their course, and amendment of their lives, doing sundry things, it may be, in the pursuit of those designs and purposes. For they will thereon abstain from their old sins, with whose haunt they are much perplexed, and betake themselves unto the performance of those duties from whence they expect most relief unto their consciences, and whose neglect doth most reflect upon them. Especially will they do so when the hand of God is upon them in afflictions and dangers; Psal. lxxviii. 34—37. And this produceth in them that kind of goodness, which God says, 'is like the morning cloud or the early dew;' things that make a fair appearance of something, but immediately vanish away; Hos. vi. 4. Certainly there need not much pains to convince any man, how unspeakably this comes short of that evangelical holiness, which is a fruit of the sanctification of the Spirit. It hath neither the root of it, nor any fruit that doth so much as resemble it. But it is to be lamented, that such multitudes of rational creatures, living under the means of light and grace, should so vainly and wofully delude their own souls. That which they aim at and intend, is, to have that in them whereby they may be accepted with God. Now, not to insist on what will absolutely frustrate all the designs of such persons, namely, their want of faith in Christ, and an interest in his righteousness thereby, which they are regardless of; all that they project and design, is as far beneath that holiness which God requireth of them, and which they think hereby to obtain, as the earth is beneath the heavens. All that they do in this kind is utterly lost, it will never be either a righteousness unto them or a holiness in them. But this

deceit is frequently rebuked; God only by his grace can remove and take it away from the minds of men.

2. And we may learn hence, not to be imposed on by *gifts* though never so useful, with a *plausible profession* thereon. These things go a great way in the world, and many deceive both themselves and others by them. Gifts are from the Holy Ghost in an especial manner; and therefore greatly to be esteemed. They are also frequently useful in and unto the church; for 'the manifestation of the Spirit is given unto men to profit withal.' And they put men on such duties as have a great show and appearance of holiness. By the help of them alone, may men pray and preach, and maintain spiritual communication among them with whom they do converse. And as circumstances may be ordered, they put sundry persons on a frequent performance of these duties; and so keep them up to an eminency in profession. But yet when all is done, they are not holiness, nor are the duties performed in the strength of them alone, duties of evangelical obedience accepted of God in them by whom they are performed; and they may be where there is nothing of holiness at all. They are not indeed only consistent with holiness, but subservient unto it, and exceeding promoters of it, in souls that are really gracious. But they may be alone without grace, and then are they apt to deceive the mind with a pretence of being and doing what they are not, nor do. Let them be called to an account by the nature and properties of that habit and principle of grace which is in all true holiness as before explained, and it will quickly appear how short they come thereof. For, as their subject where they have their residence, is the mind only, and not the will or affections, 'any farther but as they are influenced or restrained by light, so they do not renew nor change the mind itself, so as to transform it into the image of God. Neither do they give the soul a general inclination unto all acts and duties of obedience, but only a readiness for that duty which their exercise doth peculiarly consist in. Wherefore, they answer no one property of true holiness, and we have not seldom seen discoveries made thereof.

Least of all can *morality*, or a course of *moral duties*, when it is alone, maintain any pretence hereunto. We have had attempts to prove, that there is no *specifical* difference be-

tween common and saving grace, but that they are both of the same kind, differing only in *degrees*. But some, as though this ground were already gained, and needed no more contending about, do add, without any consideration of these petty distinctions of *common and saving grace*, that *morality* is *grace*, and *grace* is *morality*, and nothing else. To be a gracious holy man according to the gospel, and to be a moral man, is all one with them. And as yet it is not declared, whether there be any difference between *evangelical holiness* and *philosophical morality*. Wherefore, I shall proceed to the

Fourth thing proposed; and this is, farther to prove, that this *habit*, or gracious principle of holiness, is *specifically distinct* from all other habits of the mind whatever, whether intellectual or moral, connate or acquired, as also from all that common grace and the effects of it, whereof any persons not really sanctified may be made partakers.

The truth of this assertion is indeed sufficiently evident from the description we have given of this *spiritual habit*, its nature and properties. But whereas there are also other respects giving farther confirmation of the same truth, I shall call over the most important of them, after some few things have been premised. As,

1. A *habit*, of what sort soever it be, qualifies the subject wherein it is, so that it may be denominated from it, and make the actions proceeding from it to be suited unto it, or to be of the same nature with it. As Aristotle says, 'Virtue is a habit which maketh him that hath it good or virtuous, and his actions good.' Now all moral habits are seated in the will. Intellectual habits are not immediately affective of good or evil, but as the will is influenced by them. These habits do incline, dispose, and enable the will to act according to their nature. And in all the acts of our wills, and so all external works which proceed from them, two things are considered. First, The act itself, or the work done; and, secondly, The end for which it is done. And both these things are respected by the habit itself, though not immediately yet by virtue of its acts. It is, moreover, necessary and natural, that every act of the will, every work of a man, be for a certain end. Two things, therefore, are to be considered in all our obedience: (1.) The *duty* itself we do; and, (2.) The *end* for which we do it. If any habit, therefore, doth

not incline and dispose the will unto the proper end of duty, as well as unto the duty itself, it is not of that kind from whence true gospel obedience doth proceed. For the end of every act of gospel obedience, which is the glory of God in Jesus Christ, is essential unto it. Let us then take all the habits of moral virtue, and we shall find, that however they may incline and dispose the will unto such acts of virtue as materially are duties of obedience, yet they do it not with respect unto this end. If it be said, that such moral habits do so incline the will unto duties of obedience with respect unto this end, then is there no need of the grace of Jesus Christ or the gospel, to enable men to live unto God, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, which some seem to aim at.

2. Whereas, it is the *end* that gives all our duties their special nature, this is twofold:

(1.) The *next;* and, (2.) The *ultimate;* or it is *particular* or *universal.* And these may be different in the same action. As a man may give alms to the poor, his next particular end may be to relieve and cherish them: this end is good, and so far the work or duty itself is good also. But the ultimate and general end of this action may be self, merit, reputation, praise, compensation for sin committed, and not the glory of God in Christ; which vitiates the whole. Now moral habits, acquired by endeavours answerable unto our light and convictions, or the dictates of enlightened reason, with resolutions and perseverance, may incline and dispose the will unto actions and works, that for the substance of them are duties, and are capable of having particular ends that are good, but a want of respect unto the general end allows them not to be any part of gospel obedience. And this is applicable unto all moral habits and duties whatever. But the difference asserted, is farther manifested,

First, From the especial *fountain* and *spring* of holiness, which constitutes its nature of another kind, than any common grace or morality can pretend unto: and this is *electing love,* or God's purpose of election. Eph. i. 4. 'He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unblamable before him in love.' God chooseth us from eternity, that we should be holy; that is, with a design and purpose to make us so. He sets some

men apart in his eternal purpose, as those unto whom he will communicate holiness. It is, therefore, an especial work of God, in the pursuit of an especial and eternal purpose. This gives it its especial nature, and makes it, as was said, of another kind than any effect of common grace whatever. That is holiness, which God works in men by his Spirit, because he hath chosen them, and nothing else is so. For he 'chooseth us unto salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit;' 2 Thess. ii. 13. Salvation is the end that God aimeth at in his choosing of us, in subordination unto his own glory; which is and must be the ultimate end of all his purposes and decrees, or of all the free acts of his wisdom and love. The means which he hath ordained, whereby we shall be brought unto this salvation so designed in his eternal purpose, is the 'sanctification of the Spirit.' Gospel holiness, therefore, is the effect of that sanctification of the Spirit, which God hath designed as the especial way and means on their part, of bringing the elect unto salvation. And his choosing of them is the cause and reason why he doth so sanctify them by his Spirit. And, where our sanctification is comprised under our vocation, because therein and thereby we are sanctified, by the sanctifying principle of holiness communicated unto us, it is not only reckoned as an effect and consequent of our predestination, but is so conjoined thereunto, as to declare, that none others are partakers of it, but those that are predestinate; Rom. viii. 30.

And this consideration is of itself sufficient to evince, that this holiness whereof we treat, differs essentially from all other habits of the mind, and actions proceeding from them, as having an especial nature of its own. Whatever there may be in any men, of virtue and piety, or whatever their endeavours may be, in ways of honesty and duty towards God and men, if the power and principle of it in them be not a fruit of electing love, of the Spirit of sanctification, given of God for this certain end, that we may attain the salvation whereunto we are chosen, it belongeth not unto this holiness. Wherefore, the apostle Peter, giving us in charge, to use all diligence whereby we may make our 'calling and election sure,' that is, unto our souls, and in our own minds, prescribes as the means of it, the exercise and increase of those graces which are its proper effects; 2 Pet. i.

5—7. 10. And the reason why we see so many glorious professions of faith and obedience utterly to fail as we do, is because the faith so professed was not 'the faith of the elect of God;' Tit. i. 1. And the obedience of it was not the fruit of that Spirit of sanctification, which God gives to man, to make his purpose of election infallibly effectual; that so the 'purpose of God, which is according to election, might stand;' Rom. ix. 11. And the election, or those elected, might obtain the grace and glory designed for them; Rom. xi. 5. 7. And it is an evidence of much spiritual sloth in us, or that which is worse, namely, that our graces and obedience are not genuine, and of the true heavenly race, if we endeavour not to satisfy ourselves, that they are real effects of electing love.

If any one shall inquire, How we may know whether the graces of holiness, which we hope are in us, and the duties that proceed from them, are fruits and effects of *election*, seeing such only are *genuine* and durable. I answer, it may be done three ways:

1. By their *growth* and *increase*. This in ordinary cases, setting aside the seasons of prevalent temptations and desertions, is the best evidence hereof. Waters that proceed from a living fountain, increase in their progress, because of the continual supplies which they have from their spring; when those which have only occasional beginnings, from showers of rain or the like, do continually decay until they are dried up. The graces that come from this eternal spring, have continual supplies from it, so that if they meet with no violent obstructions (as they may do sometimes for a season), they do constantly increase and thrive. And, therefore, no man can secure his spiritual comforts one moment under a sensible decay of grace. For such a decay is a very sufficient reason why he should call the truth of all his grace into question. Where the Spirit of sanctification is, as given in pursuit of the purpose of election, it is a 'well of water springing up into everlasting life;' John iv. 14. The quietness and satisfaction of professors under a decay of grace, is a soul-ruining security, and hath nothing in it of spiritual peace.

2. We may discern it, when we are *much stirred up* unto diligent *actings* and *exercise* of grace, out of a sense of that

electing love from whence all grace doth proceed. It is the nature of grace that is the fruit of election, greatly to affect the heart and mind with a sense of the love that is therein: so the apostle says expressly, that one grace exciteth and stirreth up another, from a sense of the love of God, which sets them all on work; Rom. v. 2—5. So God is said to 'draw us with loving-kindness,' because 'he hath loved us with everlasting love;' Jer. xxxi. 3. That is, he gives us such a sense of his everlasting love, as thereby to draw us after him in faith and obedience. Those principles of duties in us which are excited only by fear, awe, hope, and the jealous observances of an awakened conscience, will scarce at any time evince this heavenly extract unto a spiritual understanding. That grace which proceeds from especial love, will carry along with it a holy quickening sense of it, and thereby be excited unto its due exercise. And we do what we can to famish and starve our graces, when we do not endeavour their supplies by faith on that spring of divine love from whence they proceed.

3. Seeing we are *chosen in Christ*, and predestinated to be like unto him, those graces of holiness have the most evident and legible characters of *electing love* upon them, which are most effectual in working us unto a *conformity* to him. That grace is certainly from an eternal spring, which makes us like unto Jesus Christ. Of this sort, are meekness, humility, self-denial, contempt of the world, readiness to pass by wrongs, to forgive enemies, to love and do good unto all, which indeed are despised by the most, and duly regarded but by few. But I return.

Secondly, The especial *procuring cause* of this holiness is the *mediation of Christ*. We are not in this matter concerned in any thing, let men call it what they please, virtue, or godliness, or holiness, that hath not an especial relation unto the Lord Christ, and his mediation. Evangelical holiness is purchased for us by him, according to the tenor of the everlasting covenant, is promised unto us on his account, actually impetrated for us by his intercession, and communicated unto us by his Spirit. And hereby we do not only cast off all the moral virtues of the Heathens from having the least concernment herein, but all the principles and duties of persons professing Christianity, who are not really and

actually implanted into Christ. For he it is, who of God 'is made unto us sanctification;' 1 Cor. i. 30. And this he is on several accounts, the heads whereof may be called over.

1. He is made unto us of God *sanctification*, with respect unto his *sacerdotal office*, because we are purified, purged, washed, and cleansed, from our sins by his blood, in the oblation of it, and the application of it unto our souls, as hath been at large declared; Eph. v. 26, 27. Tit. ii. 14. 1 John i. 7. Heb. ix. 14. All that we have taught before, concerning the purification of our minds and consciences by the blood of Christ, is peculiar unto gospel holiness, and distinguisheth it essentially from all common grace, or moral virtues. And they do but deceive themselves, who rest in a multitude of duties, it may be animated much with zeal, and set off with a profession of the most rigid mortification, whose hearts and consciences are not thus purged by the blood of Christ.

2. Because he prevails for the *actual sanctification* of our natures, in the *communication* of holiness unto us by his *intercession*. His prayer, John xvii. 17. is the blessed spring of our holiness. 'Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.' There is not any thing of this grace wrought in us, bestowed on us, communicated unto us, preserved in us, but what is so in answer unto, and compliance with the intercession of Christ. From his prayer for us, is holiness begun in us; 'Sanctify them,' saith he, 'by thy truth.' Thence is it kept alive and preserved in us; 'I have,' saith he to Peter, 'prayed for thee, that thy faith should not fail;' and through his intercession are we saved to the uttermost. Nothing belongs to this holiness, but what in the actual communication of it is a peculiar fruit of Christ's intercession: what is not so, what men may be made partakers of upon any more general account, belongs not thereunto. And if we really design holiness, or intend to be holy, it is our duty constantly to improve the intercession of Christ for the increase of it. And this we may do by especial applications to him for that purpose. So the apostles prayed him, to 'increase their faith;' Luke xvii. 3. And we may do so, for the increase of our holiness. But the nature of this application unto Christ, for the increase of holiness, by virtue of his intercession, is duly to be considered. We are not to pray

unto him, that he would intercede for us, that we may be sanctified. For as he needs not our minding for the discharge of his office, so he intercedes not orally in heaven at all, and always doth so virtually by his appearance in the presence of God, with the virtue of his oblation or sacrifice. But whereas the Lord Christ gives out no supplies of grace unto us, but what he receiveth from the Father for that end, by virtue of his intercession, we apply ourselves unto him under that consideration; namely, as he who, upon his intercession with God for us, hath all stores of grace to give us supplies from.

3. He is so, because the *rule* and *measure* of holiness unto us, the instrument of working it in us, is his word and doctrine; which he taught the church as the great prophet of it. 'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' The inbred dictates of the light and law of nature in their greatest purity, are not the rule or measure of this holiness; much less are these rules and maxims which men deduce, partly right and partly wrong, from them, of any such use. Nor is the written law itself so. It is the rule of original holiness, but not the adequate rule of that holiness whereunto we are restored by Christ. Neither are both these in conjunction, the dictates of nature and the law written, the instruments of working holiness in us. But it is the doctrine of the gospel which is the adequate rule and immediate instrument of it. My meaning is, that the word, the gospel, the doctrine of Christ, in the preceptive part of it, is so the rule of all our obedience and holiness, as that all which it requireth belongeth thereunto, and nothing else but what it requireth doth so; and the formal reason of our holiness consists in conformity thereunto, under this consideration, that it is the word and doctrine of Christ. Nothing belongeth unto holiness materially, but what the gospel requireth; and nothing is so in us formally, but what we do, because the gospel requireth it. And it is the instrument of it, because God maketh use of it alone as an external means for the communicating of it unto us, or the ingenerating of it in us. Principles of natural light, with the guidances of an awakened conscience, do direct unto, and exact the performance of, many material duties of obedience. The written law requireth of us all duties of

original obedience, and God doth use these things variously for the preparing of our souls unto a right receiving of the gospel. But there are some graces, some duties, belonging unto evangelical holiness, which the law knows nothing of: such are the mortification of sin, godly sorrow, daily cleansing of our hearts and minds; not to mention the more sublime and spiritual acts of communion with God by Christ, with all that faith and love which is required in us towards him. For although these things may be contained in the law radically, as it requires universal obedience unto God, yet are they not so formally. And it is not used as the means to beget faith and holiness in us: this is the effect of the gospel only. Hence it is said to be 'the power of God unto salvation;' Rom. i. 16. or that whereby God puts forth the greatness of his power unto that purpose; the 'word of his grace, which is able to build us up, and give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified;' Acts xx. 30. It is that by whose preaching faith cometh; Rom. x. 17. and by the hearing whereof we receive the Spirit; Gal. iii. 2. It is that whereby we are begotten in Christ Jesus; 1 Cor. iv. 15. James i. 17. 1 Pet. i. 23—25. And all that is required of us in the way of external obedience, is but that our conversation be such as becometh the gospel.

And this is a proper touchstone for our holiness, to try whether it be genuine, and of the right kind or no. If it be, it is nothing but the seed of the gospel quickened in our hearts, and bearing fruit in our lives. It is the delivery up of our souls into the mould of the doctrine of it, so as that our minds and the word should answer one another, as face doth unto face in water. And we may know whether it be so with us or no, two ways. For, (1.) if it be so, none of the commands of the gospel will be grievous unto us, but easy and pleasant. A principle suited unto them all, inclining unto them all, connatural unto them, as proceeding from them, being implanted in our minds and hearts, it renders the commands themselves so suited unto us, so useful, and the matter of them so desirable, that obedience is made pleasant thereby. Hence is that satisfaction of mind, with rest and joy, which believers have in gospel duties, yea, the most difficult of them; with that trouble and sorrow which ensues upon their neglect, omission, or their being deprived

of opportunities for them. But in the strictest course of duties that proceedeth from any other principle, the precepts of the gospel, or at least some of them, on account of their spirituality, or simplicity, are either esteemed grievous or despised. (2.) None of the truths of the gospel will seem strange unto us. This makes up the evidence of a genuine principle of gospel holiness, when the commands of it are not grievous, nor the truths of it strange or uncouth. The mind so prepared receives every truth, as the eye doth every increase of light, naturally and pleasantly, until it come unto its proper measure. There is a measure of light which is suited unto our visive faculty; what exceeds it, dazzles and amazes, rather than enlightens; but every degree of light, which tends unto it, is connatural and pleasant to the eye. So is it with the sanctified mind and spiritual truth: there is a measure of light issuing from spiritual truths, that our minds are capable of; what is beyond this measure belongs to glory; and the gazing after it will rather dazzle than enlighten us: and such is the issue of overstrained speculations, when the mind endeavours an excess as to its measure. But all light from truth which tends to the filling up of that measure is pleasant, and natural to the sanctified mind. It sees wisdom, glory, beauty, and usefulness, in the most spiritual, sublime, and mysterious truths, that are revealed in and by the word; labouring more and more to comprehend them, because of their excellency. For want hereof, we know how the truths of the gospel are by many despised, reproached, scorned, as those which are no less foolishness unto them, to be believed, than the precepts of it are grievous to be obeyed.

4. He is so, as he is the *exemplary cause* of our holiness. The design of God in working grace and holiness in us, is, that 'we may be conformed unto the image of his Son, that he may be the first-born among many brethren;' Rom. viii. 29. And our design in the attaining of it, is, first that we may be like him, and then express or shew forth 'the virtues of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, unto his glory and honour;' 1 Pet. ii. 9. To this end is he proposed in the purity of his natures, the holiness of his person, the glory of his graces, the innocency and usefulness of his conversation in the world, as the great *idea*

and *exemplar*, which in all things we ought to conform ourselves unto. And as the nature of evangelical holiness consists herein, namely, in a universal conformity unto him, as he is the image of the invisible God, so the proposal of his example unto us, is an effectual means of ingenerating and increasing it in us.

It is by all confessed, that examples are most effectual ways of instruction, and if seasonably proposed do secretly solicit the mind unto imitation, and almost unavoidably incline it thereunto. But when, unto this power which examples have *naturally* and *morally* to instruct and affect our minds, things are peculiarly designed and instituted of God to be our *examples*, he requiring of us, that from them we should learn both what to do, and what to avoid, their force and efficacy is increased. This the apostle instructs us in at large; 1 Cor. x. 6—11. Now both these concur in the example of holiness that is given us in the person of Christ. For,

(1.) He is not only in himself, *morally* considered, the most perfect, absolute, glorious *pattern* of all grace, holiness, virtue, obedience, to be chosen and preferred above all others, but he is *only* so; there is no other complete example of it. As for those examples of heroical virtue, or stoical apathy, which are boasted of among the Heathens, it were an easy matter to find such flaws and tumours in them, as would render them not only uncomely but deformed and monstrous. And in the lives of the best of the saints, there is declared what we ought expressly to avoid, as well as what we ought to follow; and in some things we are left at a loss, whether it be safe to conform unto them or no, seeing we are to be followers of none any farther than they were so of Jesus Christ, and wherein they were so; neither in what they were or did, were they absolutely our rule and example in itself, but only so far as therein they were conformable unto Christ. And the best of their graces, the highest of their attainments, and the most perfect of their duties, have their spots and imperfections; so that although they should have exceeded what we can attain unto, and are therefore meet to be proposed unto our imitation, yet do they come short of what we aim at, which is to be holy as God is holy. But in this our great exemplar, as there was never the least show of variableness

from the perfection of holiness ('for he did no sin, neither was there any guile found in him,' yea, 'in him was light and no darkness at all'), so were all his graces, all his actings of them, all his duties, so absolute and complete, as that we ought to aim no higher, nor to propose any other pattern unto ourselves. And who is it, that, aiming at any excellency, would not design the most absolute and perfect example. This, therefore, is to be found as unto holiness in Christ, and in him alone.

And, (2.) he is *appointed of God* for this purpose. One end why God sent his Son to take our nature upon him, and to converse in the world therein, was, that he might set us an example in our own nature, in one who was like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, of that renovation of his image in us, of that return unto him from sin and apostacy, of that holy obedience which he requireth of us. Such an example was needful, that we might never be at a loss about the will of God in his commands, having a glorious representation of it before our eyes; and this could be given us no otherwise but in our own nature. The angelical nature was not suited to set us an example of holiness and obedience, especially as to the exercise of such graces as we principally stand in need of in this world. For what examples could angels set unto us in themselves, of patience in afflictions, of quietness in sufferings, seeing their nature is incapable of such things. Neither could we have had an example that was perfect and complete in our own nature, but only in one who was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.' To this end, therefore, among others, did God send his own Son to take our nature on him, and therein to represent unto us the perfect *idea* of that holiness and obedience which he requireth of us. It is evident, therefore, that these two considerations of an instructive example, that it hath a moral aptitude to incite the mind unto imitation, and that it is instituted of God unto that purpose, are both found eminently in this of Christ.

But there is yet more in this matter: For, [1.] as God hath appointed the consideration of Christ as an especial ordinance unto the increase of holiness in us, so his holy obedience as proposed unto us, hath a peculiar efficacy unto that purpose beyond all other instituted examples. For, 1st,

we are often called to behold Christ, and to look upon him; or it is promised that we shall do so; Isa. xlv. 22. Zech. xii. 10. Now this beholding of Christ, or looking on him, is the consideration of him by faith unto the ends for which he is exhibited, proposed, and set forth of God in the gospel, and promises thereof. This, therefore, is an especial ordinance of God, and is by his Spirit made effectual. And these ends are two: (1st.) Justification; (2dly.) Salvation, or deliverance from sin and punishment. 'Look,' saith he, 'unto me, and be saved.' This was he on the cross, and is still so in the preaching of the gospel, wherein he is 'evidently crucified before our eyes;' Gal. iii. 1. lifted up as 'the brazen serpent in the wilderness;' John iii. 14, 15. that we, looking on him by faith, as 'bearing our sins in his own body on the tree,' 1 Pet. i. 24. and receiving the atonement made thereby, Rom. v. 11. may through faith in him be justified from all our sins, and saved from the wrath to come. But this we intend not. For, 2ndly. he is of God proposed unto us in the gospel, as the great pattern and exemplar of holiness; so as that, by God's appointment, our beholding and looking on him in the way mentioned, is a means of the increase and growth of it in us. So our apostle declares, 2 Cor. iii. 18. 'We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord.' That which is proposed unto us, is the 'glory of the Lord;' or the glory of God 'in the face of Jesus Christ;' chap. iv. 6. that is, God gloriously manifesting himself in the person of Christ. This are we said to 'behold with open face;' the veil of types and shadows being taken off and removed, faith doth now clearly and distinctly view and consider Jesus Christ as he is represented unto us in the glass of the gospel; that is, the evidences of the presence of God in him and with him, in his work, purity, and holiness. And the effect hereof is, that we are, through the operation of the Spirit of God, changed into the same image, or made holy, and therein like unto him.

[2.] There is *peculiar force* and *efficacy* by the way of *motive* in the *example* of Christ, to incline us unto the imitation of him, that is not to be found in any other example on any occasion whatever. Because, 1st. whatever is proposed unto us, in what he was, or what he did, as our pattern and example,

he was it, and did it, not for his own sake, but out of free and mere love unto us. That pure nature of his, which we ought to be labouring after a conformity unto, 1 John iii. 3. and which he will at length bring us unto, Phil. iii. 21. he took it upon him by an infinite condescension, merely out of love unto us; Heb. ii. 14, 15. Phil. ii. 5—7. And all the actings of grace in him, all the duties of obedience will be performed, all that glorious compliance with the will of God in his sufferings which he manifested, proceed all from his love unto us; John xvii. 19. Gal. ii. 20. These things being in themselves truly honourable and excellent, yea, being only so; the holiness and obedience which God requireth of us consisting in them, being by the appointment of God proposed unto our imitation in the example of Jesus Christ, how must it needs influence and prevail on gracious souls to endeavour a conformity unto him therein, to be as he was, to do as he did, seeing he was what he was, and did what he did, merely out of love unto us, and for no other end. And, 2ndly. every thing which we are to imitate in Christ, is other ways also beneficial unto us. For we are in its place and way even saved thereby. By his obedience we are made righteous; Rom. v. 19. There is no grace nor duty of Christ, which he did perform, but we have the advantage and benefit of it. And this increaseth the efficacy of this example. For who would not strive to obtain these things in himself, of whose being in Christ he hath so great advantage.

In this regard also, therefore, is the Lord Christ made sanctification unto us, and is the cause of evangelical holiness in us. And certainly we are, the most of us, much to blame, that we do not more abound in the use of this means unto the end mentioned. Did we abide more constantly in the beholding or contemplation of the person of Christ, of the glory and beauty of his holiness, as the pattern and great example proposed unto us, we should be more transformed into his image and likeness. But it is so fallen out, that many who are called Christians, delight to be talking of, and do much admire, the virtuous sayings and actions of the Heathen, and are ready to make them the object of their imitation, whilst they have no thoughts of the grace that was in our Lord Jesus Christ, nor do endeavour after conformity thereunto. And the reason is, because the virtue which they

seek after and desire, is of the same kind with that which was in the Heathen, and not of that grace and holiness which was in Christ Jesus. And thence also it is, that some, who, not out of love unto it, but to decry other important mysteries of the gospel thereby, do place all Christianity in the imitation of Christ, do yet indeed in their practice despise those qualities and duties wherein he principally manifested the glory of his grace. His meekness, patience, self-denial, quietness in bearing reproaches, contempt of the world, zeal for the glory of God, compassion to the souls of men, condescensions to the weaknesses of all, they regard not. But there is no greater evidence, that whatever we seem to have of any thing that is good in us, is no part of evangelical holiness, than that it doth not render us comformable to Christ.

And we should always consider, how we ought to act faith on Christ with respect unto this end. Let none be guilty practically of what some are falsely charged withal as to doctrine. Let none divide in the work of faith, and exercise themselves but in the one half of it. To believe in Christ for redemption, for justification, for sanctification, is but one half of the duty of faith. It respects Christ only as he died and suffered for us, as he made atonement for our sins, peace with God, and reconciliation for us, as his righteousness is imputed unto us unto justification. Unto these ends indeed is he firstly and principally proposed unto us in the gospel, and with respect unto them are we exhorted to receive him, and to believe in him. But this is not all that is required of us. Christ in the gospel is proposed unto us as our pattern and example of holiness. And as it is a cursed imagination, that this was the whole end of his life and death, namely, to exemplify and confirm the doctrine of holiness which he taught; so to neglect his so being our example, in considering him by faith to that end, and labouring after conformity to him, is evil and pernicious. Wherefore, let us be much in the contemplation of what he was, what he did, how in all instances of duties and trials he carried himself, until an image or idea of his perfect holiness is implanted in our minds, and we are made like unto him thereby.

4. That which principally differenceth *evangelical holiness*, with respect unto the Lord Christ, from all other *natural* or

moral habits or duties, and whereby he is made *sanctification* unto us, is, that from him, his person as our head, the principle of *spiritual life and holiness* in believers is derived; and by virtue of their *union* with him, real supplies of spiritual strength and grace, whereby their holiness is preserved, maintained and increased, are constantly communicated unto them. On the stating and proof hereof, the whole difference about *grace* and *morality* doth depend, and will issue. For if that which men call *morality* be so derived from the Lord Christ by virtue of our union with him, it is *evangelical grace;* if it be not, it is either nothing, or somewhat of another nature and kind; for *grace* it is not, nor *holiness* neither. And all that I have to prove herein, is, that the Lord Jesus Christ is a *head of influence,* the spring or fountain of spiritual life unto his church, wherein I know myself to have the consent of the church of God in all ages. And I shall confine the proof of my assertion unto the ensuing positions, with their confirmation.

First, Whatever *grace* God promiseth unto any, bestoweth on them or worketh in them, it is all so bestowed and wrought, in, by, and through, Jesus Christ, as the *mediator* or middle person between God and them. This the very notion and nature of his office of mediator, and his interposition therein between God and us, doth require. To affirm that any good thing, any grace, any virtue, is given unto or bestowed on us, or wrought in us by God, and not immediately through Christ; or that we believe in God, yield obedience unto him, or praise with glory, not directly by Christ, is utterly to overthrow his mediation. Moses indeed is called a mediator between God and the people; Gal. iii. 19. as he was an *internuntius,* a messenger to declare the mind of God to them, and to return their answers unto God; but to limit the mediatory work of Christ, unto such an interposition only, is to leave him but one office, that of a prophet, and to destroy the principal uses and effects of his mediation towards the church. In like manner, because Moses is called λυτρωτὴς, a saviour or redeemer, Acts vii. 35. metaphorically, with respect unto his use and employment, in that mighty work of the deliverance of the people out of Egypt; some will not allow, that the Lord Christ is a Redeemer in any other sense; subverting the whole gospel, with the faith

and souls of men. But, in particular, what there is of this nature, in the mediation of Christ, in his being the middle person between God and us, may be declared in the ensuing assertions.

1. God himself is the absolute infinite *fountain*, the supreme efficient *cause*, of all grace and holiness. For he alone is originally and essentially holy, as he only is good, and so the first cause of holiness and goodness to others. Hence he is called the 'God of all grace;' 1 Pet. v. 10. The author, possessor, and bestower of it. 'He hath life in himself, and quickeneth whom he pleaseth;' John v. 26. 'With him is the fountain of life;' Psal. xxxvi. 9. as hath been declared before. This, I suppose, needs no farther confirmation with them who really acknowledge any such thing as grace and holiness. These things, if any, are among those 'perfect gifts' which 'are from above,' coming down 'from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning;' James i. 17.

2. God, from his own *fulness*, communicates unto his creatures, either by the way of *nature*, or by the way of *grace*. In our first creation God implanted his image on us, in uprightness and holiness, in and by the making or creation of our nature: and had we continued in that state, the same image of God should have been communicated by natural propagation. But since the fall and entrance of sin, God no more communicates holiness unto any by way of nature, or natural propagation. For if he did so, there would be no necessity that every one who is born must be born again, before he enter into the kingdom of God; as our Saviour affirmeth there is; John iii. 3. For he might have grace and holiness from his first nativity. Nor could it be said of believers, that they are 'born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;' John i. 13. For grace might be propagated unto them by those natural means. It was the old Pelagian figment, that what we have by nature we have by grace, because God is the author of nature. So he was as it was pure, but it is our own as it is corrupt; and what we have thereby, we have of ourselves in contradiction to the grace of God. 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh;' and we have nothing else by natural propagation.

3. God communicates nothing in a way of grace unto any, but in and by the person of Christ as the mediator and head of the church; John i. 18. In the old creation all things were made by the eternal Word, the person of the Son, as the wisdom of God; John i. 3. Col. i. 16. There was no immediate emanation of divine power from the person of the Father, for the production of all or any created beings, but in and by the person of the Son, their wisdom and power being one and the same as acted in him. And the supportation of all things in the course of divine providence, is his immediate work also; whence he is said to 'uphold all things with the word of his power;' Heb. i. 3. And so it is in the new creation, with respect unto his person as mediator. Therein was he the 'image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, having the pre-eminence in all things; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist;' Col. i. 15. 17, 18. In the raising of the whole new creation, which is by a new spiritual life and holiness, communicated unto all the parts of it, the work is carried on immediately by the person of Christ the mediator, and none hath any share therein, but what is received and derived from him. This is plainly asserted, Eph. ii. 10. So the apostle disposeth of this matter; the 'head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God;' 1 Cor. xi. 3. which is so in respect of influence, as well as of rule. As God doth not immediately govern the church, but in and by the person of Christ, whom he hath given to be head over all things thereunto; so neither doth he administer any grace or holiness unto any, but in the same order; for, 'the head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God.'

4. God doth work real, effectual, sanctifying grace, spiritual strength and holiness in believers, yea, that grace whereby they are enabled to believe, and are made holy, and doth really sanctify them more and more, that they may be preserved 'blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' This hath been so fully confirmed in the whole of what hath been discoursed, both concerning regeneration and sanctification, as that it must not be here again insisted on. Wherefore, all this grace, according unto the former assertions, is communicated unto us through and by Christ, and no otherwise.

Secondly, Whatever is wrought in believers by the *Spirit of Christ,* it is in their *union* to the person of Christ, and by virtue thereof. That the Holy Spirit is the immediate efficient cause of all grace and holiness, I have sufficiently proved already, unto them to whom any thing in this kind will be sufficient. Now the end why the Holy Spirit is sent, and consequently of all that he doth as he is so sent, is to glorify Christ; and this he doth by receiving from Christ, and communicating thereof unto others; John xvi. 13—15. And there are two works of this kind which he hath to do, and doth effect. 1. To unite us to Christ: and, 2. To communicate all grace unto us from Christ, by virtue of that union.

1. By him are we *united* unto Christ; that is, his person, and not a *light* within us as some think, nor the *doctrine of the gospel* as others with an equal folly seem to imagine. It is by the doctrine and grace of the gospel that we are united, but it is the person of Christ, whereunto we are united. 'For he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit;' 1 Cor. vi. 17. because by that one Spirit he is joined unto him. 'For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body;' 1 Cor. xii. 13. implanted into the body, and united unto the head. And therefore, 'if we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his;' Rom. viii. 9. We are therefore his, that is, united unto him, by a participation of his Spirit. And hereby Christ himself is in us, for 'Jesus Christ is in us, except we be reprobates;' 2 Cor. xiii. 5. That is, he is in us 'by his Spirit that dwelleth in us;' Rom. viii. 9. 11. 1 Cor. vi. 19. It may therefore be inquired, Whether we receive the Spirit of the gospel from the person of Christ, or no. And this is the inquiry, which nothing but the extreme ignorance or impudence of some could render seasonable or tolerable, seeing formerly no Christian ever doubted of it, nor is he so now who doth disbelieve it. It is true, we receive him by the 'preaching of the gospel;' Gal. iii. 2. But it is no less true, that we receive him immediately from the person of Christ. For no other reason is he called so frequently the 'Spirit of Christ;' that is, the Spirit which he gives, sends, bestows, or communicates. He receives of the Father the 'promise of the Holy Ghost,' and sheddeth him forth; Acts ii. 33.

But it may be said, that, if hereby we are united unto

Christ, namely, by his *Spirit*, then we must be *holy* and *obedient* before we so receive him, wherein our *union* doth consist. For certainly, *Christ* doth not unite *ungodly* and impure sinners unto himself, which would be the greatest dishonour unto him imaginable. We must, therefore, be *holy*, obedient, and like unto Christ, before we can be united unto him, and so consequently before we receive his *Spirit*, if thereby we are united to him.

Ans. 1. If this be so, then indeed are we not beholden in the least unto the *Spirit of Christ*, that we are holy and obedient, and like to Christ. For he that hath the Spirit of Christ, is united unto him: and he who is united to him hath his Spirit, and none else. Whatever, therefore, is in any man, of holiness, righteousness, or obedience, antecedent unto union with Christ, is no especial effect of his Spirit. Wherefore, in this case we must purify ourselves, without any application of the blood of Christ unto our souls, and we must sanctify ourselves, without any especial work of the Spirit of God on our nature. Let them that can, satisfy themselves with these things; for my part, I have no esteem or valuation of that holiness as holiness, which is not the immediate effect of the Spirit of sanctification in us.

2. It is granted, that ordinarily, the Lord Christ, by the *dispensation* of his *word*, by *light* and convictions thence ensuing, doth prepare the souls of men in some measure for the *inhabitation* of his Spirit. The way and manner hereof hath been fully before declared.

3. It is denied, that on this supposition, the Lord Christ doth *unite impure or ungodly sinners* unto himself, so as that they should be so united, and continue impure and ungodly. For in the same instant whereby any one is united unto Christ, and by the same act whereby he is so united, he is really and habitually purified and sanctified. For, where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty, and purity, and holiness. All acts and duties of holiness, are in order of nature consequential hereunto; but the person is quickened, purified, and sanctified, in its union.

Whereas, therefore, the Spirit of Christ communicated from him, for our union with him, is the cause and author of all grace and evangelical holiness in us, it is evident, that we receive it directly from Christ himself, which

gives it the difference from all other habits and acts pleaded for.

2. The second work of the *Spirit* is to *communicate* all grace unto us from *Christ*, by virtue of that *union*. I shall take it for granted, until all that hath been before discoursed about the work of the Holy Spirit in our regeneration and sanctification be disproved, that he is the author of all grace and holiness; and when that is disproved, we may part with our Bibles also, as books which do openly and palpably mislead us. And what he so works in us, he doth it in pursuit of his first communication unto us, whereby we are united unto Christ, even for the edification, preservation, and farther sanctificatiou of the mystical body, making every member of it meet for the 'inheritance of the saints in light.' And in those supplies of grace which he so gives, acted by us in all duties of obedience, consists all the holiness which I desire any acquaintance withal, or a participation of.

3. There is a *mystical spiritual body*, whereof Christ is the head, and his church are the members of it. There is, therefore, a union between them in things spiritual, like unto that which is between the head and members of the body of a man in things natural. And this the Scripture, because of the weight and importance of it, with its singular use unto the faith of believers, doth frequently express. God hath 'given him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all;' Eph. i. 22, 23. 'For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body being many are one body; so also is Christ;' 1 Cor. xii. 12. 'Christ is the head, from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love;' Eph. iv. 15, 16. And the same apostle speaks again to the same purpose; Col. ii. 19. 'Not holding the head, from which the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.' Now it hath been always granted, by all them who acknowledge the divine person of the Son of God, or the union of the human nature unto the divine in his person, that the Lord Jesus is

the head of his church, in the double sense of that word; for he is the political head of it in a way of rule and government; and he is the really spiritual head as unto vital influences of grace unto all his members. The Romanists indeed cast some disturbance on the former, by interposing another, immediate, ruling, governing head, between him and the catholic church; yet do they not deny, but that the Lord Christ in his own person, is yet the absolute supreme king, head, and ruler of the church. And the latter the Socinians cannot grant; for denying his divine person, it is impossible to conceive, how the human nature subsisting alone by itself, should be such an immense fountain of grace, as from whence there should be an emanation of it into all the members of the mystical body; but by all other Christians this hath hitherto been acknowledged; and, therefore, there is nothing belongs unto gospel grace or holiness, but what is originally derived from the person of Christ, as he is the head of the church. And this is most evidently expressed in the places before alleged. For, 1 Cor. xii. 12. it is plainly affirmed, that it is between Christ and the church as it is between the head and the members of the same natural body. Now not only the whole body hath guidance and direction in the disposal of itself from the head, but every member in particular hath influences of life actually, and strength from thence, without which it can neither act nor move, nor discharge its place or duty in the body. 'So also is Christ,' saith the apostle; not only hath the whole mystical body of the church guidance and direction from him, in his laws, rules, doctrine, and precepts, but spiritual life and motion also: and so hath every member thereof. They all receive from him grace for holiness and obedience, without which they would be but withered and dead members in the body: but he hath told us, that because 'he liveth, we shall live also;' John xiv. 19. For the Father having given him to have 'life in himself,' John v. 26. whereon 'he quickeneth' with spiritual life 'whom he will;' ver. 23. from that fountain of spiritual life are given unto the church, and therefore, because he liveth, we live also; that is, a spiritual life here, without which we shall never live eternally hereafter. And, Eph. iv. 16. the relation of believers unto Christ being stated exactly to answer the relation and union of the

members of the body unto the head, it is expressly affirmed, that as in the natural body there are supplies of nourishment and natural spirits communicated from the head unto the members, by the subserviency of all the parts of the body, designed unto that purpose, to the growth and increase of the whole in every part; so from Christ the head of the church, which he is in his divine person as God and man, there is a supply of spiritual life, strength, and nourishment, made unto every member of the body, unto its increase, growth, and edification; 'for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;' chap. v. 30. being made out of him, as Eve was out of Adam; yet so continuing in him, as to have all our supplies from him; 'we in him, and he in us,' as he speaks, John xiv. 20. And, Col. ii. 19. it is expressly affirmed, that from him the head, there is nourishment ministered unto the body, unto its increase with the increase of God. And what this spiritual nourishment supplied unto the souls of believers for their increase and growth, from Christ their head, can be, but the emanation from his person, and communication with them of that grace which is the principle and spring of all holiness and duties of evangelical obedience, none have as yet undertaken to declare. And if any do deny it, they do what lies in them to destroy the life and overthrow the faith of the whole church of God. Yea, upon such a blasphemous imagination, that there could be an intercision for one moment of influences of spiritual life and grace from the person of Christ unto the church; the whole must be supposed to die and perish, and that eternally.

4. The whole of what we assert, is plainly and evidently proposed in sundry *instructive allusions*, which are made use of to this purpose. The principal of them, is that both laid down and declared by our Saviour himself; John xv. 1. 4, 5. 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Abide in me, and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, and ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me (or severed from me, apart from me) ye can do nothing.' The natural in-being of the vine and branches in each other, is known unto all, with the rea-

son of it; and so is the way whereby the in-being of the branches in the vine, is the cause and means of their fruit-bearing. It is no otherwise, but by the communication and derivation of that *succus;* i. e. juice and nourishment, which alone is the preservative of vegetative life, and the next cause of fruit-bearing. In this juice and nourishment all fruit is virtually, yea, also, as to the first matter and substance of it: in and by the branch it is only formed into its proper kind and perfection. Let any thing be done to intercept this communication from the vine unto any branch, and it not only immediately looseth all its fruit-bearing power and virtue, but itself also withereth and dieth away. And there is a mutual acting of the vine and branches in this matter. Unto the vine itself it is natural from its own fulness to communicate nourishment unto the branches; it doth it from the principle of its nature. And unto the branches it is also natural, to draw and derive their nourishment from the vine. Thus is it, saith the Lord Christ unto his disciples, between me and you. 'I am the vine,' saith he, 'and ye are the branches;' and there is a mutual in-being between us, 'I am in you, and ye are in me,' by virtue of our union. That now which is expected from you is, that you bring forth fruit; that is, that you live in holiness and obedience unto the glory of God: unless you do so, you are no true real branches in me, whatever outward profession you may make of your so being. But how shall this be effected? How shall they be able to bring forth fruit? This can be no otherwise done, but by their abiding in Christ; and thereby continually deriving spiritual nourishment, that is, grace and supplies of holiness from him. For, saith he, χωρὶς ἐμοῦ, 'separate,' or 'apart from me,' ye can do nothing of this kind. And that is, because nothing becomes fruit in the branch that was not nourishment from the vine. Nothing is duty, nothing is obedience, in believers, but what is grace from Christ communicated unto them. The preparation of all fructifying grace is in Christ, as the fruit of the branches is naturally in the vine. And the Lord Christ doth spiritually and voluntarily communicate of this grace unto all believers, as the vine communicates its juice unto the branches naturally: and it is in the new nature of believers to derive it from him by faith. This being done, it is in them turned

into particular duties of holiness and obedience. Therefore, it is evident, that there is nothing of evangelical holiness in any one person whatever, but what is in the virtue, power, and grace, of it derived immediately from Jesus Christ, by virtue of relation unto him, and union with him: and it may be inquired, whether this be so with moral virtue or no. The same is taught by our apostle, under the similitude of an olive-tree and its branches; Rom. xi. As also, where he is affirmed to be a living stone, and believers to be built on him, as lively stones into a spiritual house; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.

Particular testimonies do so abound in this case, as that I shall only name some few of them; John i. 15. 'He is full of grace and truth. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.' It is of the person of Christ, or the 'Word made flesh,' the Son of God incarnate, that the Holy Ghost speaketh. He was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. It is not the fulness of the Deity, as it dwelt in him personally, that is here intended, but that which was in him as he was made flesh; that is, in his human nature, as inseparably united unto the divine: an all-fulness that he received by the good pleasure or voluntary disposal of the Father; Col. i. 19. and, therefore, belongeth not unto the essential fulness of the Godhead. And as to the nature of this fulness, it is said to consist in grace and truth; that is, the perfection of holiness, and knowledge of the whole mind, counsel, and mystery, of the will of God. Of this fulness do we 'receive grace for grace,' all the grace in every kind whereof we are made partakers in this world. That this fulness in Christ, expresseth the inconceivable fulness of his human nature, by virtue of his indissolute personal union with all graces in their perfection, wherein he received not the Spirit by measure; John iii. 34. is, as I suppose, by all Christians acknowledged, I am sure cannot be denied without the highest impiety and blasphemy. Hence, therefore, the Holy Ghost being witness, do we derive and receive all our grace, every one according to his measure; Eph. iv. 7. Wherefore, grace is given unto the Lord Christ in an immeasurable perfection, by virtue of his personal union; Col. ii. 9. and from him is it derived unto us, by the gracious inhabitation of his Spirit in us; 1 Cor. vi. 19. Eph.

iv. 30. according unto the degree of participation allotted unto us. This, in the substance of it, is contained in this testimony. There was and is in Jesus Christ a fulness and perfection of all grace; in us, of ourselves, or by anything that we have by nature, or natural generation, by blood, or the flesh, or the will of man (ver. 13.), there is none at all. Whatever we have, is received and derived unto us from the fulness of Christ, which is an inexhaustible fountain thereof, by reason of his personal union.

To the same purpose is he said to be 'our life,' and 'our life to be hid with him in God;' Col. iii. 3. Life is the principle of all power and operation. And the life here intended, is that whereby we live to God, the life of grace and holiness. For the actings of it consist in the setting of our affections on heavenly things, and mortifying our members that are on the earth. This life Christ is; he is not so formally; for if he were, then it would not be our life, but his only. He is, therefore, so efficiently, as that he is the immediate cause and author of it, and that as he is now with God in glory. Hence it is said, that we live, that is, this life of God, yet so as that we live not of ourselves, but Christ liveth in us; Gal. i. 20. And he doth no otherwise live in us, but by the communication of vital principles, and a power for vital acts, that is, grace and holiness from himself unto us. If he be our life, we have nothing that belongs thereunto, that is, nothing of grace or holiness, but what is derived unto us from him.

To conclude, we have all grace and holiness from Christ, or we have it of ourselves. The old Pelagian fiction, that we have them from Christ, because we have them by yielding obedience unto his doctrine, makes ourselves the only spring and author of them, and on that account very justly condemned by the church of old, not only as false, but as blasphemous. Whatever, therefore, is not thus derived, thus conveyed unto us, belongs not unto our sanctification or holiness, nor is of the same nature or kind with it. Whatever ability of mind or will may be supposed in us, what application soever of means may be made for the exciting and exercise of that ability, whatever effects, in virtues, duties, all offices of humanity, and honesty, or religious observances, may be produced thereby from them, and wrought by us, if it be not all derived from Christ, as the head and prin-

ciple of spiritual life unto us, it is a thing of another nature than evangelical holiness.

Thirdly, The immediate efficient *cause* of all gospel holiness, is the *Spirit of God*. This we have sufficiently proved already. And although many cavils have been raised against the manner of his operation herein, yet none have been yet so hardy, as openly to deny that this is indeed his work: for so to do, is, upon the matter, expressly to renounce the gospel. Wherefore, we have in our foregoing discourses, at large vindicated the manner of his operations herein, and proved, that he doth not educe grace by moral applications unto the natural faculties of our minds, but that he creates grace in us by an immediate efficiency of almighty power. And what is so wrought and produced, differeth essentially from any natural or moral habits of our minds, however acquired or improved.

Fourthly, This evangelical holiness is a *fruit* and *effect* of the *covenant of grace*. The promises of the covenant unto this purpose, we have before, on other occasions, insisted on. In them doth God declare, that he will cleanse and purify our natures, that he will write his law in our hearts, put his fear in our inward parts, and cause us to walk in his statutes, in which things our holiness doth consist. Whoever, therefore, hath any thing of it, he doth receive it in the accomplishment of these promises of the covenant. For there are not two ways whereby men may become holy, one by the sanctification of the Spirit according to the promise of the covenant, and the other by their own endeavours without it; though indeed Cassianus, with some of the semi-pelagians, dreamed somewhat to that purpose. Wherefore, that which is thus a fruit and effect of the promise of the covenant, hath an especial nature of its own, distinct from whatever hath not that relation unto the same covenant. No man can ever be made partaker of any, the least degree, of that grace or holiness which is promised in the covenant, unless it be by virtue and as a fruit of that covenant. For if they might do so, then were the covenant of God of none effect; for what it seems to promise in a peculiar manner, may on this supposition be attained without it, which renders it an empty name.

Fifthly, Herein consists the *image* of God, whereunto we

are to be renewed. This I have proved before, and shall afterward have occasion to insist upon. Nothing less than the entire renovation of the image of God in our souls, will constitute us evangelically holy. No series of obediential actings, no observance of religious duties, no attendance unto actions amongst men as morally virtuous and useful, how exact soever they may be, or how constant soever we may be unto them, will ever render us lovely or holy in the sight of God, unless they all proceed from the renovation of the image of God in us, or that habitual principle of spiritual life and power which renders us conformable unto him.

From what hath been thus briefly discoursed, we may take a prospect of that horrible mixture of ignorance and impudence wherewith some contend, that the *practice* of *moral virtue* is all the holiness which is required of us in the gospel; neither understanding what they say, nor whereof they do affirm. But yet this they do with so great a confidence, as to despise and *scoff* at any thing else which is pleaded to belong thereunto. But this pretence, notwithstanding all the swelling words of vanity wherewith it is set off and vended, will easily be discovered to be weak and frivolous. For,

1. The *name* or expression itself is foreign to the Scripture, not once used by the Holy Ghost, to denote that obedience which God requireth of us, in and according to the covenant of grace. Nor is there any sense of it agreed upon, by them who so magisterially impose it on others. Yea, there are many express contests about the signification of these words, and what it is that is intended by them; which those who contend about them are not ignorant of, and yet have they not endeavoured to reduce the sense they intend unto any expression used concerning the same matter in the gospel, but all men must needs submit unto it, that at least the main parts, if not the whole of religion, consists in moral virtue, though it be altogether uncertain what they intend by the one or the other. These are they who scarce think any thing intelligible, when declared in the words of the Scripture, which one hath openly traduced as a ridiculous jargon. They like not, they seem to abhor, the speaking of spiritual things, in the words which the Holy Ghost

teacheth, the only reason whereof is, because they understand not the things themselves. And whilst they are foolishness unto any, it is no wonder, the terms whereby they are declared, seem also so to be. But such as have received the Spirit of Christ, and do know the mind of Christ (which profane scoffers are sufficiently remote from), do best receive the truth and apprehend it, when declared, not in 'the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which are taught by the Holy Ghost.' It is granted, to be the wisdom and skill of men farther to explain and declare the truths that are taught in the gospel, by sound and wholesome words of their own, which yet all of them, as to their propriety and significancy, are to be tried and measured by the Scripture itself. But we have a new way of teaching spiritual things sprung up among some, who, being ignorant of the whole mystery of the gospel, and therefore despising it, would debase all the glorious truths of it, and the declaration made of them, into dry, barren, sapless, philosophical notions and terms, and those the most common, obvious, and vulgar, that ever obtained among the Heathen of old. Virtuous living they tell us is the way to heaven; but what this virtue is, or what is a life of virtue, they have added as little in the declaration of, as any persons that ever made such a noise about them.

2. That ambiguous term *moral,* hath by usage obtained a double signification, with respect unto an opposition unto other things which either are not so, or are more than so. For sometimes it is applied unto the worship of God, and so is opposed unto instituted. That religious worship which is prescribed in the decalogue, or required by the law of creation, is commonly called moral, and that in opposition unto those rites and ordinances which are of a superadded arbitrary institution. Again, it is opposed unto things that are more than merely moral; namely, spiritual, theological or divine. So the graces of the Spirit, as faith, love, hope, in all their exercise, whatever they may have of morality in them, or however they may be exercised in and about moral things and duties, yet because of sundry respects wherein they exceed the sphere of morality, are called graces and duties, theological, spiritual, supernatural, evangelical, divine, in opposition unto all such habits of the mind and

duties, which being required by the law of nature, and as they are so required, are merely moral. In neither sense can it with any tolerable congruity of speech be said, that moral virtue is our holiness, especially the whole of it. But because the duties of holiness, have, the most of them, a morality in them, as moral is opposed to instituted, some would have them have nothing also in them, as moral is opposed to supernatural and theological. But that the principle and acts of holiness are of another special nature, hath been sufficiently now declared.

3. It is, as was before intimated, somewhat uncertain, what the great pleaders for *moral virtue* do intend by it. Many seem to design no more but that honesty and integrity of life which was found among some of the Heathens, in their virtuous lives and actions. And, indeed, it were heartily to be wished, that we might see more of it amongst some that are called Christians. For, many things they did were materially good, and useful unto mankind: but let it be supposed to be never so exact, and the course of it most diligently attended unto; I defy it, as to its being the holiness required of us in the gospel, according unto the terms of the covenant of grace; and that because it hath none of those qualifications which we have proved essentially to belong thereunto. And I defy all the men in the world to prove, that this moral virtue is the sum of our obedience to God, whilst the gospel is owned for a declaration of his will and our duty. It is true, all the duties of this moral virtue are required of us, but in the exercise of every one of them there is more required of us than belongs unto their morality, as, namely, that they be done in faith, and love to God through Jesus Christ; and many things are required of us as necessary parts of our obedience, which belong not thereunto at all.

4. Some give us such a description of *morality*, as that it should be of the same extent with the light and law of nature, or the dictates of it, as rectified and declared unto us in the Scripture. And this, I confess, requires of us the obedience which is due towards God by the law of our creation, and according to the covenant of works materially and formally. But what is this unto evangelical holiness and obedience? Why it is alleged, that religion before the entrance of sin and under the gospel is one and the same, and there-

fore there is no difference between the duties of obedience required in the one and the other. And it is true, that they are so far the same, as that they have the same author, the same object, the same end, and so also had the religion under the law, which was, therefore, so far the same with them. But that they are the same as to all the acts of our obedience, and the manner of their performance, is a vain imagination. Is there no alteration made in religion by the interposition of the person of Christ to be incarnate, and his mediation? No augmentation of the object of faith? No change in the abolishing of the old covenant, and the establishment of the new; the covenant between God and man being that which gives the especial form and kind unto religion, the measure and denomination of it? No alteration in the principles, aids, assistances, and whole nature of our obedience unto God? The whole mystery of godliness must be renounced, if we intend to give way unto such imaginations. Be it so then, that this moral virtue and the practice of it, do contain and express all that obedience materially considered, which was required by the law of nature in the covenant of works, yet, I deny it to be our holiness or evangelical obedience; and that, as for many other reasons, so principally, because it hath not that respect unto Jesus Christ which our sanctification hath.

5. If it be said, that by this *moral virtue* they intend no exclusion of Jesus Christ, but include a respect unto him, I desire only to ask, whether they design by it such a habit of mind, and such acts thence proceeding, as have the properties before described, as to their causes, rise, effects, use, and relation unto Christ and the covenant, as are expressly and plainly in the Scripture assigned unto evangelical holiness? Is this moral virtue, that which God hath predestinated or chosen us unto before the foundation of the world? Is it that which he worketh in us in the pursuit of electing love? Is it that which gives us a new heart, with the law of God written in it? or is it a principle of spiritual life, disposing, inclining, enabling us to live to God, according to the gospel, produced in us by the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost, not educed out of the natural powers of our own souls by the mere application of external means? Is it that which is purchased and procured for us by Jesus Christ, and

the increase whereof in us he continueth to intercede for? Is it the image of God in us, and doth our conformity unto the Lord Christ consist therein? If it be so, if moral virtue answer all these properties and adjuncts of holiness, then the whole contest in this matter, is, whether the Holy Spirit or these men be wisest, and know best how to express the things of God rationally and significantly. But if the moral virtue they speak of, be unconcerned in these things, if none of them belong unto it, if it may and doth consist without it, it will appear at length to be no more as to our acceptance before God, than what one of the greatest moralists in the world complained that he found it when he was dying, a mere empty name. But this fulsome Pelagian figment of a holiness or evangelical righteousness, whose principle should be natural reason, and whose rule is the law of nature as explained in the Scripture, whose use and end is acceptation with God, and justification before him, whereof those who plead for it, the most of them, seem to understand no more but outward acts of honesty, nor do practise so much, being absolutely opposite unto, and destructive of, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, being the mere doctrine of the Quakers, by whom it is better and more intelligibly expressed, than by some new patrons of it amongst us; will not in the examination of it create any great trouble, unto such as look upon the Scripture to be a revelation of the mind of God in these things.

OF THE

ACTS AND DUTIES

OF

HOLINESS.

CHAP. VII.

Actual inherent righteousness in duties of holiness and obedience, explained. The work of the Holy Spirit with respect thereunto. Distribution of the positive duties of holiness. Internal duties of holiness. External duties, and their difference. Effectual operation of the Holy Spirit necessary unto every act of holiness. Dependance on Providence with respect unto things natural, and on grace with respect unto things supernatural, compared. Arguments to prove the necessity of actual grace, unto every duty of holiness. Contrary designs and expressions of the Scripture and some men, about duties of holiness.

II. The second part of the work of the Spirit of God in our sanctification, respects the *acts* and *duties* of holy obedience. For what we have before treated of, chiefly concerns the principle of it as habitually resident in our souls, and that both as unto its first infusion into us, as also its preservation and increase in us. But we are not endued with such a principle or power to act it at our pleasure, or as we see good, but God, moreover, 'worketh in us to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.' And all these acts and duties of holiness, or gospel obedience, are of two sorts; or may be referred unto two heads. First, Such as have the *will* of God in *positive commands* for their object, which they respect in duties internal and external, wherein we do what God requireth. Secondly, Such as respect *divine prohibitions*, which consist in the actings of grace or holiness, in an opposition unto, or the *mortification* of, sin. And what is the work of the Holy Spirit, what is the aid which he affords us in both these sorts of duties, must be declared.

i. The acts and duties of the first sort, respecting *positive*

divine commands, fall under a double distinction. For, 1. they are in their own nature either *internal* only; or, 2. *External* also. There may be internal acts of holiness, that have no external effects. But no external acts or duties are any part of holiness, which are only so, and no more; for it is required thereunto, that they be quickened and sanctified by internal actings of grace. Two persons may, therefore, at the same time, perform the same commanded duties, and in the same outward manner, yet may it be the duty of evangelical holiness in the one, and not in the other; as it was with Cain and Abel, with the other apostles and Judas. For if faith and love be not acted in either of them, what they do is duty but equivocally, properly it is not so.

1. By the duties of holiness that are *internal* only, I intend all acts of faith, love, trust, hope, fear, reverence, delight, that have God for their immediate object, but go not forth, nor exert themselves in any external duties; and in these doth our spiritual life unto God principally consist. For they are as the first acts of life, which principally evidence the strength or decays of it. And from these we may take the best measure of our spiritual health, and interest in holiness. For we may abound in outward duties, and yet our hearts be very much alienated from the life of God. Yea, sometimes men may endeavour to make up what is wanting with them, by a multitude of outward duties, and so have 'a name to live when they are dead,' wherein the true nature of hypocrisy and superstition doth consist; Isa. i. 11—15. But when the internal actings of faith, fear, trust, and love, abound and are constant in us, they evidence a vigorous and healthy condition of soul.

2. Duties that are *external,* also, are of two sorts; or, are distinguished with respect unto their objects and end. For, (1.) God himself is the *object* and end of some of them, as of prayer and praises, whether *private* or more *solemn.* And of this nature are all those which are commonly called, duties of the first table; all such as belong unto the sanctification of the name of God in his worship. (2.) Some respect men of all sorts in their various capacities, and our various relations unto them, or have men for their *object,* but God for their end. And among these, also, I include those which principally regard ourselves, or our own persons. The whole

of what we intend, is summarily expressed by our apostle, Tit. ii. 12.

Concerning all these acts and duties, whether *internal* only, or *external* also, whether their proper object be God, ourselves, or other men, so far as they are *acts of holiness*, and are accepted with God, they proceed from a *peculiar operation* of the Holy Spirit in us. And herein, to make our intention the more evident, we may distinctly observe:

1. That there is in the minds, wills, and affections, of all believers, a *meetness, fitness, readiness,* and habitual disposition unto the *performance* of all acts of obedience towards God, all duties of piety, charity, and righteousness, that are required of them, and hereby are they internally and habitually distinguished from them that are not so. That it is so with them, and whence it comes to be so, we have before declared. This power and disposition is wrought and preserved in them by the Holy Ghost.

2. No believer can of *himself* act, that is, actually exert or exercise, this *principle,* or power, of a *spiritual* life, in any one instance of any duty, *internal* or *external,* towards God or men, so as that it shall be an act of holiness, or a duty accepted with God. He cannot, I say, do so of himself, by virtue of any power habitually inherent in him. We are not in this world intrusted with any such spiritual ability from God, as without farther actual aid and assistance, to do any thing that is good: therefore,

3. That which at present I design to prove, is, that the *actual aid, assistance, and internal operation of the Spirit of God, is necessary, required, and granted, unto the producing of every holy act of our minds, wills, and affections, in every duty whatever.* Or, notwithstanding the power or ability which believers have received in or by *habitual* grace, they still stand in need of *actual* grace, in, for, and unto, every single, gracious, holy act or duty towards God. And this I shall now a little farther explain, and then confirm.

As it is in our natural lives with respect unto God's providence, so it is in our spiritual lives with respect unto his grace. He hath in the works of nature endowed us with a vital principle, or an act of the quickening soul upon the body, which is quickened thereby. By virtue hereof, we are enabled unto all vital acts, whether natural and neces-

sary, or voluntary, according to the constitution of our beings, which is intellectual. 'God breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul;' Gen. ii. 7. giving him a principle of life, he was fitted for, and enabled unto, all the proper acts of that life. For a principle of life is an ability and disposition unto acts of life. But yet, whosoever is thus made a living soul, who is endued with this principle of life, he is not able originally, without any motion or acting from God as the first cause, or independently on him, to exert or put forth any vital act: that which hath not this principle, as a dead carcass, hath no meetness unto vital actions, nor is capable either of motion or alteration, but as it receives impressions from an outward principle of force, or an inward principle of corruption. But he in whom it is, hath a fitness, readiness, and habitual power for all vital actions, yet so as without the concurrence of God in his energetical providence, moving and acting of him, he can do nothing. For, in God 'we live, and move, and have our being;' Acts xvii. 28. And if any one could of himself perform an action without any concourse of divine operation, he must himself be absolutely the first and only cause of that action, that is, the creator of a new being.

It is so as unto our spiritual life. We are, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, furnished with a principle of it, in the way and for the ends before described. Hereby are we enabled and disposed to live unto God, in the exercise of spiritually vital acts, or the performance of duties of holiness. And he who hath not this principle of spiritual life, is spiritually dead, as we have at large before manifested, and can do nothing at all that is spiritually good. He may be moved unto, and, as it were, compelled by the power of convictions, to do many things that are materially so. But that which is on all considerations spiritually good, and accepted with God, he can do nothing of. The inquiry is, what believers themselves, who have received this principle of spiritual life, and are habitually sanctified, can do as to actual duties, by virtue thereof, without a new immediate assistance and working of the Holy Spirit in them. And, I say, they can no more do any thing that is spiritually good, without the particular concurrence and assistance of the grace of God, unto every act thereof, than a man can naturally act

or move, or do any thing in an absolute independency on God, his power and providence. And this proportion between the works of God's providence and of his grace, the apostle expresseth, Eph. ii. 10. 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' God at the beginning made all things by a creating power, producing them out of nothing, and left them not merely to themselves and their own powers when so created, but he upholds, supports, sustains, and preserves them in the principles of their beings and operations, acting powerfully in and by them, after their several kinds. Without his supportment of their beings, by an actual incessant emanation of divine power, the whole fabric of nature would dissolve into confusion and nothing. And without his influence into, and concurrence with, their ability, for operation by the same power, all things would be dead and deformed, and not one act of nature be exerted. So also is it in this work of the new creation of all things by Jesus Christ. 'We are the workmanship of God,' he hath formed and fashioned us for himself, by the renovation of his image in us. Hereby are we fitted for good works, and the fruits of righteousness, which he hath appointed as the way of our living unto him. This new creature, this divine nature in us, he supporteth and preserveth, so as that without his continual influential power, it would perish and come to nothing. But this is not all; he doth moreover act it, and effectually concur to every singular duty, by new supplies of actual grace. So then, that which we are to prove, is, that there is an actual operation of the Holy Ghost in us, necessary unto every act and duty of holiness whatever, without which none either will or can be produced or performed by us, which is the second part of his work in our sanctification. And there are several ways whereby this is confirmed unto us.

First, The Scripture declares, that *we ourselves,* cannot in and by ourselves, that is, by virtue of *any strength or power* that we have received, *do any thing* that is spiritually good. So our Saviour tells his apostles, when they were sanctified believers, and in them all that are so; 'without me ye can do nothing;' John xv. 5. *χωρὶς ἐμοῦ,* so, 'without me,' *seorsim a me,* so 'separated from me,' as a branch may be from the

vine. If a branch be so separated from the root and body of the vine, as that it receives not continual supplies of nourishment from them, if their influence into it, be by any means intercepted, it proceeds not in its growth, it brings forth no fruit, but is immediately under decay: it is so, saith our Saviour, with believers in respect unto him. Unless they have continual uninterrupted influences of grace, and spiritually vital nourishment from him, they can do nothing. 'Without me,' expresseth a denial of all the spiritual aid that we have from Christ. On supposition hereof, 'we can do nothing;' that is, by our own power, or by virtue of any habit or principle of grace we have received. For when we have received it, what we can do thereby without farther actual assistance, we can do of ourselves. 'You can do nothing;' that is, which appertains to fruit-bearing unto God. In things natural and civil we can do somewhat, and in things sinful too much; we need no aid or assistance for any such purpose. But in fruit-bearing unto God we can do nothing. Now every act of faith and love, every motion of our minds or affections towards God, is a part of our fruit-bearing, and so unquestionably are all external works and duties of holiness and obedience. Wherefore, our Saviour himself being judge, believers who are really sanctified, and made partakers of habitual grace, yet cannot of themselves, without new actual aid and assistance of grace from him, do any thing that is spiritually good, or acceptable with God.

Our apostle confirmeth the same truth, 2 Cor. iii. 4, 5. 'And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward; not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' It is a great and eminent grace which he declareth that he was acting; namely, trust in God through Christ in the discharge of his ministry, and for the blessed success thereof: but he had no sooner expressed it, than he seems to be jealous lest he should appear to have assumed something to himself, in this work, or the trust he had for its success. This no man was ever more cautious against, and indeed it was incumbent on him so to be, because he was appointed to be the principal minister and preacher of the grace of Jesus Christ. Therefore, I say, he adds a caution against any such apprehensions, and openly renounceth any such power, abi-

lity, or sufficiency in himself, as that by virtue thereof he could act so excellent a grace, or perform so great a duty. 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves;' and in this matter he hath not only in places innumerable asserted the necessity and efficacy of grace, with our impotency without it, but in his own instance he hath made such a distinction between what was of himself, and what of grace, with such an open disclaimer of any interest of his own in what was spiritually good, distinct from grace, as should be sufficient with all sober persons, to determine all differences in this case. See 1 Cor. xv. 10. Gal. ii. 21. and this place. I assume no such thing to myself, I ascribe no such thing unto any other, as that I or they should have in ourselves a sufficiency unto any such purpose. For our apostle knew nothing of any sufficiency that needed any other thing to make it effectual. And he doth not exclude such a sufficiency in ourselves with respect unto eminent actings of grace, and greater duties, but with respect unto every good thought, or whatever may have a tendency unto any spiritual duty. We cannot conceive, we cannot engage, in the beginning of any duty by our own sufficiency. For it is the beginning of duties which the apostle expresseth by thinking; our thoughts and projections being naturally the first thing that belongs unto our actions. And this he doth, as it were, on purpose to obviate that Pelagian fiction, that the beginning of good was from ourselves, but we had the help of grace to perfect it. But what then! if we have no such sufficiency, to what purpose should we set about the thinking or doing of any thing that is good? Who will be so unwise as to attempt that which he hath no strength to accomplish? And doth not the apostle hereby deny, that he himself had performed any holy duties, or acted any grace, or done any thing that was good, seeing he had no sufficiency of himself so to do? to obviate this cavil he confines this denial of a sufficiency unto 'ourselves,' we have it not of ourselves. But, saith he, 'our sufficiency is of God,' that is, we have it by actual supplies of grace, necessary unto every duty; and how God communicates this sufficiency, and how we receive it, he declares, chap. ix. 8. 'God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.' God

manifests the abounding of grace towards us, when he works an effective sufficiency in us, which he doth so as to enable us to abound in good works, or duties of holiness. These are those supplies of grace which God gives us unto all our duties, as he had promised unto him in his own case; chap. xii. 9. And this is the first demonstration of the truth proposed unto consideration, namely, the testimonies given in the Scripture, that believers themselves cannot of themselves perform any acts or duties of holiness, any thing that is spiritually good. Therefore, these things are effects of grace, and must be wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, who is the immediate author of all divine operations.

Secondly, All *actings of grace,* all *good duties,* are actually ascribed unto the operation of the Holy Ghost. The particular testimonies hereunto, are so multiplied in the Scripture, as that it is not convenient nor indeed possible to call them over distinctly, some of them, in a way of instance, may be insisted on, and reduced unto three heads.

1. There are many places wherein we are said to be *led, guided, acted,* by the Spirit, to *live* in the Spirit, to *walk* after the Spirit, to *do things* by the Spirit that dwelleth in us. For nothing, in general, can be intended in these expressions, but the actings of the Holy Spirit of God upon our souls, in a compliance wherewith, as acting when we are acted by him, our obedience unto God according to the gospel doth consist; Gal. v. 16. 'Walk in the Spirit.' To walk in the Spirit, is to walk in obedience unto God, according to the supplies of grace which the Holy Ghost administers unto us; for so it is added, 'that we shall not then fulfil the lusts of the flesh;' that is, we shall be kept up unto holy obedience and the avoidance of sin. So are we said to be 'led by the Spirit;' ver. 18. being acted by him, and not by the vicious depraved principles of our corrupted nature. Rom. viii. 4. 'Walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.' To walk after the flesh, is to have the principles of indwelling sin, acting itself in us unto the production and perpetration of actual sins. Wherefore, to walk after the Spirit, is to have the Spirit acting in us, to the effecting of all gracious acts and duties. And this is given unto us in command, that we neglect not his motions in us, but comply with them in a way of diligence and duty; see ver. 14, 15

So are we enjoined, to attend unto particular duties 'through the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in us;' 2 Tim. i. 14. that is, through his assistance, without which we can do nothing.

2. As we are said to be *led* and *acted* by him, so he is declared to be the author of all gracious actings in us; Gal. v. 22, 23. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance.' All these things are wrought and brought forth in us by the Spirit, for they are his fruits. And not only the habit of them, but all their actings, in all their exercise, are from him. Every act of faith is faith, and every act of love is love, and consequently no act of them is of ourselves, but every one of them is a fruit of the Spirit of God. So in another place he adds a universal affirmative, comprehending all instances of particular graces and their exercise; Eph. v. 9. 'The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.' Unto these three heads, all actings of grace, all duties of obedience, all parts of holiness, may be reduced. And it is through the supplies of the Spirit, that he trusteth for a good issue of his obedience; Phil. i. 19. So is it expressly in the promise of the covenant; Ezek. xxxvi. 27. 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' This is the whole that God requireth of us, and it is all wrought in us by his Spirit. So also, chap. xi. 19, 20. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. All the obedience and holiness that God requires of us in the covenant, all duties and actings of grace, are promised to be wrought in us by the Spirit, after we are assured that of ourselves we can do nothing.

3. Particular *graces* and their exercise, are assigned unto his *acting* and working in us; Gal. v. 5. 'We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.' The hope of the righteousness of faith, is the thing hoped for thereby. All that we look for or expect in this world or hereafter, is by the righteousness of faith. Our quiet waiting for this, is an especial gospel grace and duty. This we do not of ourselves, but 'through the Spirit;' Phil. iii. 3. 'We worship God in the Spirit,' love 'the brethren in the Spirit;' Col. i. 8. we 'purify our souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren;' 1 Pet. i. 22. See Eph.

i. 17. Acts xix. 31. Rom. v. 5. viii. 15. 22. 26. 1 Thess. i. 6. Rom. xiv. 17. xv. 13. 16. of faith it is said expressly, that it is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; Eph. ii. 7, 8.

Thirdly, There are testimonies that are express unto the *position* as before laid down; Phil. ii. 13. 'It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' The things thus wrought, are all things that appertain unto our obedience and salvation, as is evident from the connexion of the words with ver. 12. 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' Hereunto two things are required: 1. *Power* for such operations, or for all the duties of holiness and obedience that are required of us. That this we are endued withal, that this is wrought in us, bestowed upon us, by the Holy Ghost, hath been before abundantly confirmed. But when this is done for us, is there ought else yet remaining to be done? Yea, 2. there is the *actual exercise* of the grace we have received. How may this be exercised? All the whole work of grace consists in the internal acts of our wills, and external operations in duties suitable thereunto. This, therefore, is incumbent on us, this we are to look unto in ourselves; it is our duty so to do, namely, to stir up and exercise the grace we have received in and unto its proper operations. But it is so our duty, as that of ourselves we cannot perform it. It is God who worketh effectually in us all those gracious acts of our wills, and all holy operations in a way of duty. Every act of our wills, so far as it is gracious and holy, is the act of the Spirit of God efficiently; he 'worketh in us to will,' or the very act of willing. To say he doth only persuade us, or excite and stir up our wills by his grace to put forth their own acts, is to say he doth not do what the apostle affirms him to do. For, if the gracious actings of our wills be so our own as not to be his, he doth not work in us to will, but only persuadeth us so to do. But the same apostle utterly excludeth this pretence, 1 Cor. xv. 10. 'I laboured abundantly, yet, not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' He had a necessity incumbent on him of declaring the great labour he had undergone, and the pains he had taken in 'preaching of the gospel:' but yet immediately, least any one should apprehend that he ascribed any thing to himself, any gracious holy actings in those labours, he adds his usual epanorthosis, 'not I;' let me not be mistaken;

it was not I, by any power of mine, by any thing in me, but it was all wrought in me by the free grace of the Spirit of God. 'Not I, but grace,' is the apostle's assertion. Suppose now, that God by his grace doth no more but aid, assist, and excite the will in its actings, that he doth not effectually work all the gracious actings of our souls in all our duties; the proposition would hold on the other hand, 'not grace, but I,' seeing the principal relation of the effect is unto the next and immediate cause, and thence hath it its denomination. And as he worketh them, 'to will' in us, so also 'to do;' that is, effectually to perform those duties whereunto the gracious actings of our wills are required.

And what hath been spoken may suffice to prove, that the Holy Spirit, as the *Author* of our *sanctification*, worketh also in us all gracious *acts* of faith, love, and obedience, wherein the first part of our *actual holiness* and *righteousness* doth consist. And the truth thus confirmed, may be farther improved unto our instruction and edification.

1. It is easily hence discernible, how contrary are the *designs* and *expressions* of the Scripture, and the *notions* of some men among us. There is not any thing that is good in us, nothing that is done well by us in the way of obedience, but the Scripture expressly and frequently assigns it unto the immediate operations of the Holy Spirit in us. It doth so, in general, as to all gracious actings whatever, and not content therewith, it proposeth every grace, and every holy duty, distinctly affirming the Holy Ghost to be the immediate author of them. And when it comes to make mention of us, it positively, indeed, prescribes our duty to us, but as plainly lets us know, that we have no power in or from ourselves to perform it. But some men speak, and preach, and write, utterly to another purpose. The freedom, liberty, power, and ability of our own wills; the light, guidance, and direction of our own minds or reasons; and from all, our own performance of all the duties of faith and obedience, are the subjects of their discourses; and that in opposition unto what is ascribed in the Scriptures unto the immediate operations of the Holy Ghost. They are all for grace; 'Not I, but grace, not I but Christ, without him we can do nothing:' these are all for our wills; not grace but our wills do all. It is not more plainly affirmed in the Scrip-

ture, that God created heaven and earth, that he sustains and preserves all things by his power, than that he creates grace in the hearts of believers; preserves it, acts it, and makes it effectual, working all our works for us, and all our duties in us. But evasions must be found out, strange, forced, uncouth senses, be put upon plain, frequently repeated expressions, to secure the honour of our wills, and to take care, that all the good we do may not be assigned to the grace of God. To this purpose distinctions are coined, evasions invented, and such an explanation is given of all divine operations, as renders them useless and insignificant. Yea, it is almost grown, if not criminal, yet weak and ridiculous in the judgment of some, that any should assign those works and operations to the Spirit of God, which the Scripture doth, in the very words that the Scripture useth. To lessen the corruption and depravation of our nature by sin; to extol the integrity and power of our reasons; to maintain the freedom and ability of our wills in and unto things spiritually good; to resolve the conversion of men unto God, into their natural good dispositions, inclinations, and the right use of their reason; to render holiness to be only a probity of life, or honesty of conversation, upon rational motives and considerations; are the things that men are now almost wearied with the repetition of. Scarce a person that hath confidence to commence for reputation in the world, but immediately he furnisheth himself with some new tinkling ornaments for these old Pelagian figments. But whoever shall take an impartial view of the design and constant doctrine of the Scripture in this matter, will not be easily carried away with the plausible pretences of men exalting their own wills and abilities, in opposition to the Spirit and grace of God by Jesus Christ.

2. From what hath been discoursed, a farther discovery is made of the nature of *gospel obedience*, of all the acts of our souls therein, and of the duties that belong thereunto. It is commonly granted, that there is a great difference between the acts and duties that are truly gracious, and those which are called by the same name, that are not so, as in any duties of faith, of prayer, of charity. But this difference is supposed generally to be in the adjuncts of those duties, in some properties of them, but not in the kind, nature, or substance of the

acts of our minds in them. Nay, it is commonly said, that whereas wicked men are said to believe, and do many things gladly in a way of obedience; what they so do, is for the substance of the acts they perform, the same with those of them who are truly regenerate and sanctified. They may differ in their principle and end, but as to their substance or essence they are the same. But there is no small mistake herein. All gracious actings of our minds and souls, whether internal only, in faith, love, or delight, or whether they go out unto external duties required in the gospel, being wrought in us by the immediate efficacy of the Spirit of grace, differ in their kind, in their essence and substance of the acts themselves, from whatever is not so wrought or effected in us. For whatever may be done by any one, in any acting of common grace, or performance of any duty of obedience, being educed out of the power of the natural faculties of men, excited by convictions, as directed and enforced by reasons and exhortations, or assisted by common aids of what nature soever, they are natural as to their kind, and they have no other substance or being but what is so. But that which is wrought in us by the especial grace of the Holy Ghost in the way mentioned, is supernatural, as being not educed out of the powers of our natural faculties, but an immediate effect of the almighty supernatural efficacy of the grace of God. And, therefore, the sole reason why God accepts and rewards duties of obedience in them that are sanctified, and regardeth not those which for the outward matter and manner of performance are the same with them, (as unto Abel and his offering he had respect, but he had no respect unto Cain and his offering; Gen. iv. 4, 5.) is not taken from the state and condition of the persons that perform them only, though that also have an influence thereinto, but from the nature of the acts and duties themselves also. He never accepts and rejects duties of the same kind absolutely with respect unto the persons that do perform them. The duties themselves are of a different kind. Those which he accepts are supernatural effects of his own Spirit in us, whereon he rewardeth and crowneth the fruits of his own grace. And as for what he rejects, whatever appearance it may have of a compliance with the outward command, it hath nothing in it that is supernaturally gracious, and so is not of the same kind with what he doth accept.

MORTIFICATION OF SIN,

THE

NATURE AND CAUSES OF IT.

CHAP. VIII.

Mortification of sin, the second part of sanctification, Frequently prescribed and enjoined as a duty. What the name signifies, with the reason thereof: as also that of crucifying sin. The nature of the mortification of sin, explained. Indwelling sin in its principle, operations, and effects, the object of mortification. Contrariety between sin and grace. Mortification a part-taking with the whole interest of grace against sin. How sin is mortified, and why the subduing of it is so called. Directions for the right discharge of this duty. Nature of it unknown to many. The Holy Spirit the author and cause of mortification in us. The manner of the operation of the Spirit in the mortification of sin. Particular means of the mortification of sin. Duties necessary unto the mortification of sin, directed unto by the Holy Ghost. Mistakes and errors of persons failing in this matter. How spiritual duties are to be managed, that sin may be mortified. Influence of the virtue of the death of Christ, as applied by the Holy Spirit, into the mortification of sin.

ii. THERE is yet another part or effect of our *sanctification* by the Holy Ghost, which consisteth in, and is called, *mortification* of sin. As what we have already insisted on, concerneth the improvement and practice of the *principle of grace*, wherewithal believers are endued; so what we now propose, concerneth the weakness, impairing, and destroying, of the *contrary principle of sin* in its root and fruits, in its principle and actings. And, whereas the Spirit of God is every where said to *sanctify us;* we ourselves are commanded, and said, constantly to *mortify* our sins. For sanctification expresseth grace communicated and received in general; mortification, grace as so received, improved, and acted unto a certain end. And I shall be brief in the handling of it, because I have formerly published a small discourse on the same subject. And there are two things that I shall speak unto: First, The *nature* of the duty itself. Secondly, The

manner how it is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost; which I principally intend.

It is known, that this duty is frqueently enjoined and prescribed unto us. Col. iii. 5. 'Mortify therefore your members that are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry;' ἐν τῷ φεύγειν, may be supplied. 'Mortify your members that are on earth;' that is, your carnal earthly affections, avoiding, or by avoiding fornication, &c. And so a distinction is made between carnal affections and their fruits: or, the special sins mentioned, are instances of these carnal affections; 'mortify your carnal affections,' namely, fornication and the like; wherein there is a metonymy of the effect for the cause. And they are called 'our members;' 1. Because, as the whole principle of sin, and course of sinning, which proceedeth from it, being called the 'body of sin,' Rom. vi. 6. or the 'body of the sins of the flesh;' Col. ii. 11. with respect thereunto, these particular lusts are here called the members of that body, 'mortify your members;' for, that he intends not the parts or members of our natural bodies, as though they were to be destroyed, as they seem to imagine who place mortification in outward afflictions and macerations of the body; he adds, τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, 'that are on the earth;' that is, earthly, carnal, and sensual. 2. These affections and lusts, the old man, that is, our depraved nature, useth naturally and readily, as the body doth its members: and, which adds efficacy unto the allusion, by them it draws the very members of the body into a compliance with it, and the service of it; against which we are cautioned by our apostle, Rom. vi. 12. 'Let not, therefore, sin reign in your mortal bodies (that is, our natural bodies), that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof;' which exhortation he pursues, ver. 19. 'as ye have yielded your members servants unto uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.' Which some neglecting, do take the members of Christ, that is, of their own bodies, which are the members of Christ, and make them the 'members of an harlot;' 1 Cor. vi. 15. And many other commands there are to the same purpose, which will afterward occur.

And concerning this great duty, we may consider three

things: 1. The name of it, whereby it is expressed. 2. The nature of it, wherein it consists. 3. The means and way, whereby it is effected and wrought.

First, For the *name*, it is two ways expressed, and both of them metaphorical. 1. By νεκροῦν and θανατοῦν, which we render to 'mortify ourselves.' The first is used, Col. iii. 5. νεκρώσατε, which is 'mortify,' that is, extinguish and destroy all that force and vigour of corrupted nature, which inclines to earthly carnal things, opposite unto that spiritual heavenly life and its actings, which we have in and from Christ, as was before declared: νεκρόω is *eneco, morte mactio*, 'to kill,' 'to affect with or destroy by death.' But yet this word is used by our apostle, not absolutely to destroy, and to kill, so as that which is so mortified or killed, should no more have any being, but that it should be rendered useless as unto what its strength and vigour would produce. So he expresseth the effects of it in the passive word, οὐ κατενόησε τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σῶμα ἤδη νενεκρωμένον; Rom. iv. 19. 'He considered not his own body now dead,' 'now mortified.' The body of Abraham was not then absolutely dead, only the natural force and vigour of it was exceedingly abated. And so he seems to mollify this expression, Heb. xi. 12. ἀφ' ἑνὸς ἐγενήθησαν, καὶ ταῦτα νενεκρωμένου; which we well render, 'of one, and him as good as dead;' ταῦτα intimating a respect unto the thing treated of. So that νεκροῦν 'to mortify,' signifies a continued act, in taking away the power and force of any thing, until it comes to be νενεκρωμένον, 'dead,' unto some certain ends or purposes, as we shall see it is in the mortification of sin; Rom. viii. 13. 'If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;' θανατοῦτε, another word to the same purpose, it signifies as the other doth, 'to put to death.' But it is used in the present tense, to denote that it is a work which must be always doing; 'If ye do mortify,' that is, if you are always and constantly employed in that work. And what the apostle here calls τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος, 'the deeds of the body,' he therein expresseth the effect for the cause metonymically; for he intends τὴν σάρκα σὺν τοῖς παθήμασι καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις, as he expresseth the same thing, Gal. v. 24. 'The flesh with its affections and lusts;' whence all the corrupt deeds wherein the body is instrumental, do arise.

2. The same duty, with relation unto the death of Christ, as the meritorious, efficient, and exemplary cause, is expressed by *crucifying;* Rom. vi. 6. 'Our old man is crucified with him;' Gal. ii. 20. 'I am crucified with Christ;' chap. v. 20. 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts;' chap. vi. 14. 'By the Lord Jesus Christ, the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' Now as, perhaps, there may be something intimated herein, of the manner of mortification of sin, which is gradually carried on unto its final destruction, as a man dies on the cross; yet that which is principally intended, is the relation of this work and duty to the death of Christ, whence we and our sins are said to be crucified with him, because we and they are so by virtue of his death; and herein do we always 'bear about in the body,' τὴν νέκρωσιν, 'the dying of our Lord Jesus Christ;' 2 Cor. iv. 10. representing the manner of it, and expressing its efficacy.

Secondly, Thus is this duty expressed, whose *nature,* in the next place, we shall more particularly inquire into, and declare, in the ensuing observations.

1. Mortification of sin is a duty *always* incumbent on us, in the whole course of our obedience. This the command testifieth, which represents it as an always present duty. When it is no longer a duty to grow in grace, it is so not to mortify sin. No man under heaven can at any time say, that he is exempted from this command, nor on any pretence. And he who ceaseth from this duty, lets go all endeavours after holiness. And as for those who pretend unto an absolute perfection, they are of all persons living the most impudent, nor do ever in this matter open their mouths, but they give themselves the lie. For,

2. This duty being *always* incumbent on us, argues undeniably the abiding in us of a *principle of sin* whilst we are in the flesh, which with its fruits is that which is to be *mortified.* This the Scripture calleth the 'sin that dwelleth in us,' the 'evil that is present with us,' the 'law of the members,' 'evil concupiscence,' 'lust,' the 'flesh,' and the like. And thereunto are the properties and actings of folly, deceit, tempting, seducing, rebelling, warring, captivating, ascribed. This is not a place to dispute the truth of this assertion, which cannot with any reputation of modesty be

denied by any who own the Scripture, or pretend to an acquaintance with themselves. But yet through the craft of Satan, with the pride and darkness of the minds of men, it is so fallen out, that the want of a true understanding hereof, is the occasion of most of those pernicious errors wherewith the church of God is at present pestered; and which practically keeps men off from being seriously troubled for their sins, or seeking out for relief by Jesus Christ. Thus one hath not feared of late openly to profess, that he knows of no deceit or evil in his own heart, though a wiser than he, hath informed us, that 'he who trusteth his own heart is a fool;' Prov. xxviii. 26.

3. *Indwelling sin,* which is the object of this duty of *mortification,* falls under a threefold consideration. (1.) Of its *root* and *principle:* (2.) Of its *disposition* and *operations:* (3.) Of its *effects.* These in the Scripture are frequently distinguished, though mostly under metaphorical expressions. So are they mentioned together distinctly, Rom. vi. 6. 'Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' (1.) The *root* or *principle* of sin, which by nature possesseth all the faculties of the soul, and as a depraved habit inclines unto all that is evil, is the *old man,* so called in opposition unto the *new man,* which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (2.) There is the *inclination,* actual *disposition,* and *operations* of this principle or habit, which is called the *body of sin* with the members of it. For, under those expressions sin is proposed as *in procinctu,* in a readiness to act itself, and inclining unto all that is evil. And this also is expressed by the 'affections and lusts of the flesh;' Gal. iv. 25. 'Deceitful lusts;' Eph. iv. 24. The 'old man is corrupt, according unto the deceitful lusts, the wills of the flesh, and the mind.' (3.) There are the *effects,* fruits, and products of these things, which are actual sins, whereby, as the apostle speaks, we *serve sin,* as bringing forth the fruits of it; that we should not henceforth *serve sin.* And these fruits are of two sorts: [1.] *Internal,* in the figments and imaginations of the heart, which is the first way whereby the lusts of the old man do act themselves. And, therefore, of those that are under the power or dominion of sin, it is said, that 'every figment or imagi-

nation of their hearts are evil continually;' Gen. vi. 5. For they have no other principle whereby they are acted, but that of sin, and, therefore, all the figments of their hearts must be necessarily evil. And with respect hereunto, our Saviour affirms, that all actual sins 'proceed out of the heart;' Matt. xv. 19. because there is their root, and there are they first formed and framed. [2.] *External,* in actual sins, such as those enumerated by our apostle; Col. iii. 5. Gal. v. 19—21. All these things together, make up the complete object of this duty of mortification. The old man, the body of death, with its members, and the works of the flesh, or the habit, operations, and effects of sin, are all of them intended, and to be respected herein.

4. This *principle,* its *operations* and *effects,* are opposed and directly contrary unto the *principle, operations,* and *fruits* of *holiness,* as wrought in us by the Spirit of God, which we have before described. (1.) They are opposed in their *principle.* For the 'flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusteth against flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other;' Gal. v. 17. These are those two adverse principles, which maintain such a conflict in the souls of believers, whilst they are in this world, and which is so graphically described by our apostle, Rom. vii. so the old and new man are opposed and contrary. (2.) In their *actings;* the *lusting* of the flesh, and the *lusting* or desires of the Spirit, *walking* after the *flesh,* and *walking* after the *Spirit, living* after the *flesh,* and *living* in the *Spirit,* are opposed also. This is the opposition that is between the body of sin with its members, and the life of grace; 'who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit;' Rom. viii. 1. 4, 5. 'We are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh ye shall live;' ver. 11—13. By this walking after the flesh, I understand not, at least not principally, the committing of actual sins, but a compliance with the principle or habit of sin prevailing in depraved unsanctified nature, allowing it a predominancy in the hearts and affections. It is when men are disposed to act according to the inclinations, lustings, motions, wills, and desires of it. Or it is to bend that way habitually in our course and conversation, which the flesh inclines and leads unto.

This principle doth not indeed equally bring forth actual sins in all, but hath various degrees of its efficacy, as it is advantaged by temptations, controlled by light, or hampered by convictions. Hence all that are under the power of sin, are not all equally vicious and sinful. But after the flesh goes the bent of the soul, and the generality of its actings. To 'walk after the Spirit,' consists in our being given up to rule and conduct, or walking according to the dispositions and inclinations of the Spirit, that which is born of the Spirit, namely, a principle of grace implanted in us by the Holy Ghost, which hath been at large insisted on before. And, (3.) the external *fruits and effects* of these two principles are contrary also, as our apostle expressly and at large declares; Gal. v. 19—24. For, whereas in the enumeration of the works of the flesh, he reckons up actual sins, as adultery, fornication, and the like, in the account he gives of the fruits of the Spirit, he insists on habitual graces, as love, joy, peace, he expresseth them both metaphorically. In the former he hath respect unto the vicious habits of those actual sins; and in the latter, unto the actual effects and duties of those habitual graces.

5. There being this universal contrariety, opposition, contending, and warfare, between grace and sin, the Spirit and the flesh, in their inward principles, powers, operations, and outward effects; the work and duty of *mortification* consists in a constant *taking part* with grace, in its principle, actings, and fruits, against the principle, acts, and fruits of sin. For the residence of these contrary principles being in, and their actings being by, the same faculties of the soul, as the one is increased, strengthened, and improved, the other must of necessity be weakened and decay. Wherefore, the *mortification of sin* must consist in these three things: (1.) The *cherishing* and improving of the principle of grace and holiness which is implanted in us by the Holy Ghost, by all the ways and means which God hath appointed thereunto, which we have spoken unto before. This is that which alone can undermine and ruin the power of sin, without which all attempts to weaken it are vain and fruitless. Let men take never so much pains to mortify, crucify, or subdue their sins, unless they endeavour in the first place to weaken and impair its strength by the increase of grace, and growing therein,

they will labour in the fire, where this work will be consumed. (2.) In *frequent actings* of the principles of grace in all duties internal and external. For where the inclinations, motions, and actings of the Spirit in all acts, duties, and fruits of holy obedience, are vigorous, and kept in constant exercise, the contrary motions and actings of the flesh are defeated. (3.) In a due *application* of the principle, power, and actings of grace, by way of opposition unto the principle, power, and actings of sin. As the whole of grace is opposed unto the whole of sin; so there is no particular lust whereby sin can act its power, but there is a particular grace ready, to make effectual opposition unto it, whereby it is mortified. And in this application of grace, in its actings in opposition unto all the actings of sin, consists the mystery of this great duty of mortification. And where men being ignorant hereof, have yet fallen under a conviction of the power of sin, and been perplexed therewith, they have found out foolish ways innumerable for its mortification, wickedly opposing external, natural, bodily force and exercise, unto an internal, moral, depraved principle, which is no way concerned therein. But hereof we must treat more afterward under the third head concerning the manner how this work is to be carried on, or this duty performed.

6. This duty of weakening sin, by the growth and improvement of grace, and the opposition which is made unto sin in all its actings thereby, is called *mortification, killing*, or *putting to death*, on sundry accounts. First and principally, from that *life*, which because of its power, efficacy, and operation, is ascribed unto *indwelling sin*. The state of the soul by reason of it is a state of death. But whereas power and operations, are the proper adjuncts or effects of life, for their sakes life is ascribed unto sin, on whose account sinners are dead. Wherefore, this corrupt principle of sin in our depraved nature, having a constant, powerful inclination, and working actually towards all evil; it is said metaphorically to live, or to have a life of its own. Therefore, is the opposition that is made unto it for its ruin and destruction called mortification or killing, being its deprivation of that strength and efficacy, whereby and wherein it is said to live. (Secondly), It may be so called because of the *violence* of that contest which the soul is put unto in this

duty. All other duties that we are called unto in the course of our obedience, may be performed in a more easy, gentle, and plain manner. Though it is our work and duty to conflict with all sorts of temptations, yea, to wrestle with 'principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places,' yet in this which we have with ourselves, which is wholly within us and from us, there is more of warring, fighting, captivating, wounding, crying out for help and assistance, a deep sense of such a violence as is used in taking away the life of a mortal enemy, than in any thing else we are called unto. And, (thirdly), the end aimed at in this duty is *destruction*, as it is of all killing. Sin, as was said, hath a life, and that such a life, as whereby it not only lives, but rules and reigns in all that are not born of God. By the entrance of grace into the soul it loseth its dominion, but not its being; its rule, but not its life. The utter ruin, destruction, and gradual annihilation of all the remainders of this cursed life of sin, is our design and aim in this work and duty, which is therefore called mortification. The design of this duty wherever it is in sincerity, is to leave sin neither being, nor life, nor operation.

And some *directions*, as our manner is, may be taken from what we have discoursed concerning the nature of this duty, directive of our own practices.

And, 1. it is evident from what hath been discoursed, that it is a work which hath a *gradual progress*, in the proceed whereof we must continually be exercised. And this respects, in the first place, the principle of sin itself. Every day, and in every duty, an especial eye is to be had unto the abolition and destruction of this principle. It will no otherwise die, but by being gradually and constantly weakened; spare it, and it heals its wounds, and recovers strength. Hence many who have attained to a great degree in the mortification of sin, do by their negligence suffer it in some instances or other so to take head again, that they never recover their former state whilst they live.

And this is the reason why we have so many withering professors among us; decayed in their graces, fruitless in their lives, and every way conformed to the world. There are some, indeed, who being under the power of that blindness and darkness, which is a principal part of the depravation of our nature, do neither see nor discern the inward secret actings

and motions of sin; its deceit and restlessness, its mixing itself one way or other in all our duties, with the defilement and guilt wherewith these things are accompanied; who judge that God scarce takes notice of any thing but outward actions, and it may be not much of them neither, so as to be displeased with them, unless they are very foul indeed, which yet he is easily entreated to pass by and excuse, who judge this duty superfluous, despising both the confession and mortification of sin, in this root and principle of it. But those who have received most grace and power from above against it, are of all others the most sensible of its power and guilt, and of the necessity of applying themselves continually unto its destruction.

2. With respect unto its *inclinations* and *operations*, wherein it variously exerts its power, in all particular instances we are continually to watch against it, and to subdue it. And this concerns us in all that we are and do; in our duties, in our calling, in our conversation with others, in our retirements, in the frames of our spirits, in our straits, in our mercies, in the use of our enjoyments, in our temptations. If we are negligent unto any occasion we shall suffer by it. This is our enemy, and this is the war we are engaged in. Every mistake, every neglect is perilous.

And, 3. the *end* of this duty with respect unto us, expressed by the apostle is, *that henceforth we should not serve sin;* which refers unto the perpetration of actual sins, the bringing forth of the actual fruits of the flesh internal or external also. In whosoever the old man is not crucified with Christ, let him think what he will of himself, he is a servant of sin. If he have not received virtue from the death of Christ, if he be not wrought unto a conformity to him therein, whatever else he may do or attain, however he may in any thing, in many things, change his course, and reform his life, he serves sin, and not God. Our great design ought to be, that we should no longer serve sin, which the apostle in the ensuing verses gives us many reasons for. It is, indeed, the worst service that a rational creature is capable of, and will have the most doleful end. What, therefore, is the only way and means whereby we may attain this end; namely, that although sin will abide in us, yet that we may not serve it, which will secure us from its danger? This is that mortification of it which we insist upon, and no other. If we expect

to be freed from the service of sin, by its own giving over to press its dominions upon us, or by any composition with it, or any other way but by being always killing or destroying of it, we do but deceive our own souls.

And, indeed, it is to be feared, that the nature of this duty is not sufficiently understood, or not sufficiently considered. Men look upon it as an easy task, and that which will be carried on with a little diligence, and ordinary attendance. But do we think it is for nothing, that the Holy Ghost expresseth the duty of opposing sin, and weakening its power by mortification, killing, or putting to death? Is there not somewhat peculiar herein, beyond any other act or duty of our lives? Certainly there is intimated a great contest of sin, for the preservation of its life. Every thing will do its utmost to preserve its life and being. So will sin do also; and if it be not constantly pursued with diligence and holy violence, it will escape our assaults. Let no man think to kill sin with few, easy, or gentle strokes. He who hath once smitten a serpent, if he follow not on his blow until he be slain, may repent that ever he begun the quarrel. And so will he who undertakes to deal with sin, and pursues it not constantly to death; sin will after a while revive, and the man must die. It is a great and fatal mistake, if we suppose this work will admit of any remissness or intermission. Again, the principle to be slain is in ourselves, and so possessed of our faculties, as that it is called ourselves. It cannot be killed without a sense of pain and trouble. Hence it is compared to the cutting off of right hands, and the plucking out of right eyes. Lusts that pretend to be useful to the state and condition of men, that are pleasant and satisfactory to the flesh, will not be mortified without such a violence as the whole soul shall be deeply sensible of. And sundry other things might be insisted on, to manifest how men deceive themselves, if they suppose this duty of mortification is that which they may carry on in a negligent careless course and manner. Is there no danger in this warfare? no watchfulness, no diligence, required of us? Is it so easy a thing to kill an enemy who hath so many advantages of force and fraud? Wherefore, if we take care of our souls, we are to attend unto this duty, with that care, diligence, watchfulness, and earnest contention of spirit, which the nature of it doth require.

And, moreover, there is no less fatal mistake where we make the object of this duty to be only some particular lusts, or the fruits of them in actual sins, as was before observed. This is the way with many. They will make head against some sins, which on one account or other they find themselves most concerned in; but if they will observe their course, they shall find with how little success they do it. For the most part, sin gets ground upon them, and they continually groan under the power of its victories. And the reason is, because they mistake their business. Contests against particular sins, are only to comply with light and convictions. Mortification with a design for holiness, respects the body of sin, the root and all its branches: the first will miscarry, and the latter will be successful. And herein consists the difference between that mortification which men are put upon by convictions from the law, which always proves fruitless, and that wherein we are acted by the Spirit of the gospel: the first, respects only particular sins, as the guilt of them reflects upon conscience; the latter, the whole interest of sin as opposed to the renovation of the image of God in us.

Thirdly, That which remains farther to be demonstrated, is, that the Holy Spirit is the *author* of this work in us, so that although it is *our duty*, it is *his grace*, and strength whereby it is performed; as also the *manner* how it is wrought by him, which is principally intended.

For the first, we have the truth of it asserted, Rom. viii. 13. *If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the flesh*: It is we that are to mortify the deeds of the flesh; it is our duty, but of ourselves we cannot do it, it must be done in or by the Spirit. Whether we take the Spirit here for the person of the Holy Ghost, as the context seems to require, or take it for the gracious principle of spiritual life in the renovation of our nature, not the Spirit himself, but that 'which is born of the Spirit,' it is all one as to our purpose; the work is taken from our own natural power or ability, and resolved into the grace of the Spirit.

And that we go no farther for the proof of our assertion, it may suffice to observe, that the confirmation of it is the principal design of the apostle, from the second verse of that chapter unto the end of the 13th. That the power and reign

of sin, its interest and prevalency in the minds of believers, are weakened, impaired, and finally destroyed (so as that all the pernicious consequences of it shall be avoided), by the Holy Ghost, and that these things could no otherwise be effected, he both affirms and proves at large. In the foregoing chapter, from the 7th verse unto the end, he declares the *nature, properties,* and *efficacy of indwelling sin,* as the remainders of it do still abide in believers. And whereas a twofold conclusion might be made from the description he gives of the power and actings of this sin, or a double question arise, unto the great disconsolation of believers, he doth in this chapter remove them both, manifesting that there was no cause for such conclusions or exceptions, from any thing by him delivered. The first of these is, that if such, if this, be the power and prevalency of indwelling sin, if it so obstruct us in our doing that which is good, and impetuously incline unto evil; what will become of us in the end, how shall we answer for all the sin and guilt which we have contracted thereby? We must, we shall, therefore, perish under the guilt of it. And the second conclusion which is apt to arise from the same consideration, is, that seeing the power and prevalency of sin is so great, and that we in ourselves are no way able to make resistance unto it, much less to overcome it, it cannot be, but that at length it will absolutely prevail against us, and bring us under its dominion, unto our everlasting ruin. Both these *conclusions* the apostle obviates in this chapter, or removes them if laid as *objections* against what he had delivered. And this he doth,

1. By a tacit *concession,* that they will both of them be found true towards all who live and die *under the law,* without an interest in Jesus Christ. For, affirming that 'there is no condemnation unto them that are in Christ Jesus,' he grants, that those who are not so cannot avoid it. Such is the guilt of this sin, and such are the fruits of it in all in whomsoever it abides, that it makes them obnoxious unto condemnation. But,

2. There is a *deliverance* from this condemnation, and from all *liableness* thereunto, by *free justification in the blood of Christ;* ver. 1. For those who have an interest in him, and are made partakers thereof, although sin may grieve them, trouble and perplex them, and by its deceit and vio-

lence cause them to contract much guilt in their surprisals, yet they need not despond, or be utterly cast down; there is a stable ground of consolation provided for them, in that 'there is no condemnation unto them that are in Christ Jesus.'

3. That none may *abuse* this consolation of the gospel, to countenance themselves unto a continuance in the *service of sin*, he gives a limitation of the subjects unto whom it doth belong, namely, all them and only them *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;* ver. 1. As for those who give up themselves unto the conduct of this principle of indwelling sin, who comply with its motions and inclinations, being acted wholly by its power, let them neither flatter nor deceive themselves, there is nothing in Christ nor the gospel to free them from condemnation. It is they only who give up themselves to the conduct of the Spirit of sanctification and holiness, that have an interest in this privilege.

4. As to the other conclusion, taken from the consideration of the *power* and *prevalency* of this principle of sin, he prevents or removes it, by a full discovery *how* and by *what means* that power of it shall be so broken, its strength abated, its prevalency disappointed, and itself destroyed, as that we need not fear the consequents of it before mentioned; but rather may secure ourselves, that we shall be the *death thereof*, and not *that* the death of our souls. Now this is, saith he, by the law or power of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus; ver. 2. And thereon he proceeds to declare, that it is by the effectual working of this Spirit in us alone, that we are enabled to overcome this spiritual adversary. This being sufficiently evident, it remaineth only that we declare the *way* and *manner* how he produceth this effect of his grace.

1. The foundation of all mortification of sin, is from the *inhabitation of the Spirit in us.* He dwells in the persons of believers as in his temple, and so he prepares it for himself. Those defilements or pollutions which render the souls of men unmeet habitations for the Spirit of God, do all of them consist in sin inherent and its effects. These, therefore, he will remove and subdue, that he may dwell in us suitably unto his holiness. Rom. viii. 11. 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies,

by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' Our mortal bodies, are our bodies as obnoxious unto death by reason of sin; as ver. 10. And the quickening of these mortal bodies, is their being freed from the principle of sin, or death and its power, by a contrary principle of life and righteousness. It is the freeing of us from being in the flesh, that we may be in the Spirit; ver. 9. And by what means is this effected? It is by the 'Spirit of him that raised Jesus from the dead;' that is, of the Father, which also is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ; ver. 9. For he is equally the Spirit of the Father and the Son. And he is described by this periphrasis, both because there is a similitude between that work, as to its greatness and power, which God wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and what he worketh in believers in their sanctification; Eph. i. 19, 20. and because this work is wrought in us by virtue of the resurrection of Christ. But under what especial consideration doth he effect this work of mortifying sin in us? It is as he dwelleth in us. God doth it by his Spirit as he dwelleth in us. As it is a work of grace, it is said to be 'wrought by the Spirit;' and as it is our duty, we are said to work it 'through the Spirit;' ver. 13. And let men pretend what they please, if they have not the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, they have not mortified any sin, but do yet walk after the flesh, and, continuing so to do, shall die.

Moreover, as this is the only *spring* of mortification in us as it is a *grace*, so the consideration of it is the principal motive unto it as it is a *duty*. So our apostle pressing unto it, doth it by this argument; 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God?' 1 Cor. vi. 19. To which we may add that weighty caution which he gives us to the same purpose; 1 Cor. iii. 16. 'Know you not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye.'

Whereas, therefore, in every duty two things are principally considered: (First), The *life* and *spring* of it, as it is wrought in us by grace. (Secondly), The *principal reason* for it and motive unto it, as it is to be performed in ourselves by the way of *duty*. Both these, as to this matter of *mortification*,

do centre in this *inhabitation* of the Spirit. For, (1.) it is he who *mortifies* and *subdues* our corruptions, who quickens us unto life, holiness, and obedience, as 'he dwelleth in us,' that he may make and prepare a habitation meet for himself. And, (2.) the principal reason and motive which we have to attend unto it, with all care and diligence as a *duty*, is that we may thereby preserve his *dwelling-place* so as becometh his grace and holiness. And indeed, whereas (as our Saviour tells us) they are things which arise from and come 'out of the heart,' that defile us, there is no greater nor more forcible motive to contend against all the defiling actings of sin, which is our mortification, than this, that by the neglect hereof the temple of the Spirit will be defiled, which we are commanded to watch against under the severe commination of being destroyed for our neglect therein.

If it be said, that whereas we do acknowledge that there are still *remainders* of this sin in us, and they are accompanied with their defilements, how can it be supposed, that the Holy Ghost will *dwell in us*, or in any one that is not perfectly *holy*? I answer, (1.) That the great matter which the Spirit of God considereth in his opposition unto sin, and that of *sin* to his work, is *dominion* and *rule*. This the apostle makes evident, Rom. vi. 12—14. Who, or what shall have the principal conduct of the mind and soul, (chap. viii. 7—9.) is the matter in question. Where sin hath the rule, there the Holy Ghost will never dwell. He enters into no soul as his habitation, but at the same instant he dethrones sin, spoils it of its dominion, and takes the rule of the soul into the hand of his own grace. Where he hath effected this work, and brought his adversary into subjection, there he will dwell, though sometimes his habitation be troubled by his subdued enemy. (2.) The *souls* and *minds* of them who are really sanctified, have continually such a *sprinkling* with the blood of Christ, and are so continually *purified* by virtue from his *sacrifice* and *oblation*, as that they are never unmeet habitations for the *Holy Spirit* of God.

2. The *manner* of the actual operation of the *Spirit* of God in effecting this work, or *how* he *mortifies* sin, or enables us to mortify it, is to be considered. And an acquaintance herewith dependeth on the knowledge of the sin that is to be mortified, which we have before described. It is the vicious

corrupt habit, and inclination unto sin, which is in us by nature, that is the principal object of this duty; or, 'the old man which is corrupt according unto deceitful lusts.' When this is weakened in us as to its power and efficacy, when its strength is abated, and its prevalency destroyed, then is this duty in its proper discharge, and mortification carried on in the soul.

Now this the Holy Ghost doth,

First, By *implanting* in our minds and all their faculties, *a contrary habit and principle*, with contrary inclinations, dispositions, and actings; namely, a principle of *spiritual* life and holiness, bringing forth the fruits thereof. By means hereof is this work effected. For sin will no otherwise die, but by being killed and slain: and whereas this is gradually to be done, it must be by warring and conflict. There must be something in us that is contrary unto it, which opposing of it, conflicting with it, doth insensibly and by degrees (for it dies not at once), work out its ruin and destruction. As in a chronical distemper, the disease continually combats and conflicts with the powers of nature, until having insensibly improved them, it prevails unto its dissolution. So is it in this matter. These adverse principles with their contrariety, opposition, and conflict, the apostle expressly asserts and describes, as also their contrary fruits and actings, with the issue of the whole, Gal. v. 16—25. The contrary principles are the flesh and Spirit, and their contrary actings are in lusting and warring one against the other; ver. 16. 'Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh:' not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh is to mortify it; for it neither will nor can be kept alive if its lusts be not fulfilled. And he gives a fuller account hereof, ver. 17. 'For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other.' If by the Spirit, the Spirit of God himself be intended, yet he 'lusteth not in us,' but by virtue of that spirit which is born of him, that is, the new nature or holy principle of obedience which he worketh in us. And the way of their mutual opposition unto one another, the apostle describes at large in the following verses, by instancing in the contrary effects of the one and the other. But the issue of the whole is, ver. 24. 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its af-

fections and lusts.' They have crucified it, that is, fastened it unto that cross, where at length it may expire. And this is the way of it, namely, the actings of the Spirit against it, and the fruits produced thereby. Hence he shuts up his discourse with that exhortation, 'if we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit;' that is, if we are endowed with this spiritual principle of life, which is to live in the Spirit, then let us act, work, and improve that spiritual principle unto the ruin and mortification of sin.

This, therefore, is the *first way* whereby the Spirit of God mortifieth sin in us, and in a compliance with it under his conduct do we regularly carry on this work and duty: that is, *we mortify sin*, by cherishing the principle of holiness and sanctification in our souls, labouring to increase and strengthen it by growing in grace, and by a constancy and frequency in acting of it in all duties, on all occasions, abounding in the fruits of it. Growing, thriving, and improving in universal holiness, in the great way of the mortification of sin. The more vigorous the principle of holiness is in us, the more weak, infirm, and dying, will be that of sin. The more frequent and lively are the actings of grace, the feebler and seldomer will be the actings of sin. The more we abound in the fruits of the Spirit, the less shall we be concerned in the works of the flesh. And we do but deceive ourselves, if we think sin will be mortified on any other terms. Men when they are galled in their consciences, and disquieted in their minds with any sin or temptation thereunto, wherein their lusts or corruptions are either influenced by Satan, or entangled by objects, occasions, and opportunities, do set themselves oft-times in good earnest to oppose and subdue it, by all the ways and means they can think upon. But all they do is in vain, and so they find it at last unto their cost and sorrow. The reason is, because they neglect this course, without which never any one sin was truly mortified in the world, nor ever will so be. The course I intend is, that of labouring universally to improve a principle of holiness, not in this or that way, but in all instances of holy obedience. This is that which will ruin sin, and without it nothing else will contribute any thing thereunto. Bring a man unto the law, urge him with the purity of its doctrine, the authority of its commands, the severity of its threatenings,

the dreadful consequences of its trangression. Suppose him convinced hereby of the evil and danger of sin, of the necessity of its mortification and destruction. Will he be able hereon to discharge this duty, so as that sin may die, and his soul may live? The apostle assures us of the contrary; Rom. vii. 7—9. The whole effect of the application of the law in its power unto indwelling sin, is, but to imitate, provoke, and increase its guilt. And what other probable way besides this unto this end, can any one fix upon.

Secondly, The Holy Ghost carrieth on this work in us as a *grace*, and enableth us unto it as our *duty*, by those *actual supplies* and *assistances* of *grace*, which he continually communicates unto us. For the same divine operations, the same supplies of grace, which are necessary unto the positive acts and duties of holiness are necessary also unto this end, that sin in the actual motions and lustings of it may be mortified; so the apostle issues his long account of the conflict between sin and the soul of a believer, and his complaint thereon, with that good word, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord;' Rom. vii. 25. namely, who supplies me with gracious assistance against the power of sin. Temptation is successful only by sin; James i. 14. And it was with respect unto an especial temptation, that the Lord Christ gives that answer unto the apostle, 'My grace is sufficient for thee;' 2 Cor. xii. 9. It is the actual supply of the Spirit of Christ that doth enable us to withstand our temptations and subdue our corruptions. This is the ἐπιχορηγία τοῦ πνεύματος; Phil. i. 19. An 'additional supply' as occasion requireth beyond our constant daily provision; or χάρις εἰς εὔκαιρον βοήθειαν; Heb. iv. 16. Grace given in to help seasonably upon our cry made for it. Of the nature of these supplies, we have discoursed before. I shall now only observe, that in the life of faith and dependance on Christ, the expectation and derivation of these supplies of grace and spiritual strength, is one principal part of our duty. These things are not empty notions as some imagine. If Christ be a head of influence unto us, as well as of rule, as the head natural is to the body; if he be our life, if our life be in him, and we have nothing but what we do receive from him; if he gives unto us supplies of his Spirit, and increases of grace; and if it be our duty by faith to look for all these things from him, and that be the

means of receiving them; which things are all expressly and frequently affirmed in the Scripture; then is this expectation and derivation of spiritual strength continually from him, the way we are to take for the actual mortification of sin. And therefore, if we would be found in a successful discharge of this duty, it is required of us; 1. That we endeavour diligently in the whole course of our lives after these continual supplies of *grace;* that is, that we wait for them in all those ways and means whereby they are communicated. For although the Lord Christ giveth them out freely and bountifully, yet our diligence in duty will give the measure of receiving them. If we are negligent in prayer, meditation, reading, hearing of the word, and other ordinances of divine worship, we have no ground to expect any great supplies to this end. And, 2. That we live and abound in the *actual exercise* of all those graces, which are most directly opposite unto those peculiar lusts or corruptions that we are most exercised withal, or obnoxious unto. For sin and grace do try their interest and prevalency in particular instances. If, therefore, any are more than ordinarily subject unto the power of any corruption, as passion, inordinate affections, love of the world, distrust of God; unless he be constant in the exercise of those graces which are diametrically opposed unto them, they will continually suffer under the power of sin.

Thirdly, It is the Holy Spirit which *directs* us unto, and *helps* us in, the performance of *those duties,* which are appointed of God unto this *end,* that they may be *means* of the mortification of sin. Unto the right use of those duties (for such there are) two things are required: 1. That we *know* them aright, in their *nature* and *use,* as also that they are appointed of God unto this *end:* and then, 2. That we *perform* them in a due *manner.* And both these we must have from the Spirit of God: he is given to believers, 'to lead them into all truth;' he teacheth and instructs them by the word, not only what duties are incumbent on them, but also how to perform them, and with respect unto what ends.

1. It is required, that we *know* them aright, in their *nature, use,* and *ends.* For want hereof, or through the neglect of looking after it, all sorts of men have wandered after foolish imaginations about this work, either as to the nature of the work itself, or as to the means whereby it may be ef-

fected. For it being a grace and duty of the gospel, thence only is it truly to be learned, and that by the teachings of the Spirit of God. And it may not be amiss to give some instances of the darkness of men's minds, and their mistakes herein.

(1.) A general apprehension that *somewhat of this nature* is necessary, arising from the observation of the disorder of our *passions*, and the exorbitancy of the *lives* of most in the world, is suited even to the light of nature, and was from thence variously improved by the *philosophers* of old. To this purpose did they give many instructions about denying and subduing the disorderly affections of the mind, conquering passions, moderating desires, and the like. But whilst their discoveries of sin rose no higher than the actual disorder they found in the affections and passions of the mind, whilst they knew nothing of the depravation of the mind itself, and had nothing to oppose unto what they did discover, but moral considerations, and those most of them notoriously influenced by vain glory and applause, they never attained unto any thing of the same kind, with the due mortification of sin.

(2.) We may look into the *papacy*, and take a view of the great appearance of this duty which is therein, and we shall find it all disappointed, because they are not led unto, nor taught the duties whereby it may be brought about by the Spirit of God. They have, by the light of the Scripture, a far clearer discovery of the nature and power of sin, than had the philosophers of old. The commandment also being variously brought and applied unto their consciences, they may be, and doubtless are and have been, many of them, made deeply sensible of the actings and tendency of indwelling sin. Hereon ensues a terror of death and eternal judgment. Things being so stated, persons who were not profligate, nor had their consciences seared, could not refrain from contriving ways and means how sin might be mortified and destroyed. But whereas they had lost a true apprehension of the only way whereby this might be effected, they betook themselves unto innumerable false ones of their own. This was the spring of all the austerities, disciplines, fastings, self-macerations, and the like, which are exercised or in use among them. For, although, they are now in prac-

tice, turned mostly to the benefit of the priests, and an indulgence unto sin in the penitents, yet they were invented and set on foot at first with a design to use them as engines for the mortification of sin; and they have a great appearance in the flesh unto that end and purpose. But yet when all was done, they found by experience that they were insufficient hereunto; sin was not destroyed, nor conscience pacified by them. This made them betake themselves to purgatory. Here they have hopes all will be set right, when they are gone out of this world, from whence none could come back to complain of their disappointments. These things are not spoken to condemn even external severities and austerities, in fastings, watchings, and abstinencies, in their proper place. Our nature is apt to run into extremes; because we see the vanity of the Papists in placing mortification of sin, in an outward shadow and appearance of it, in that bodily exercise which profiteth not; we are apt to think that all things of that nature are utterly needless, and cannot be subordinate unto spiritaul ends. But the truth is, I shall much suspect their internal mortification (pretend what they will) who always pamper the flesh, indulge to their sensual appetite, conform to the world, and lead their lives in idleness and pleasures. Yea, it is high time, that professors by joint consent should retrench that course of life, in fulness of diet, bravery of apparel, expense of time in vain conversation, which many are fallen into. But these outward austerities of themselves, I say, will never effect the end aimed at: for as to the most of them, they being such as God never appointed unto any such end or purpose, but being the fruit of men's own contrivances and inventions; let them be insisted on and pursued unto the most imaginable extremities, being not blessed of God thereunto, they will not contribute the least towards the mortification of sin. Neither is there either virtue or efficacy in the residue of them, but as they are subordinated unto other spiritual duties. So Hierome gives us an honest instance in himself, telling us, that whilst he lived in his horrid wilderness in Judea, and lodged in his cave, his mind would be in the sports and revels at Rome.

(3.) The like may be said of the *Quakers* amongst ourselves. That which first recommended them, was an *appear-*

ance of mortification, which it may be also some of them really intended, though it is evident they never understood the *nature* of it. For in the height of their outward appearances, as they came short of the sorry weeds, begging habits, macerated countenances, and severe looks of many monks in the Roman church, and dervises among the Mahometans; so they were so far from restraining or mortifying their real inclinations, as that they seemed to excite and provoke themselves to exceed all others in clamours, railings, evil speakings, reproaches, calumnies, and malicious treating of those who dissented from them, without the least discovery of a heart filled with kindness and benignity unto mankind, or love unto any but themselves; in which frame and state of things, sin is as secure from mortification as in the practice of open lusts and debaucheries. But supposing that they made a real industrious attempt for the mortification of sin, what success have they had, what have they attained unto? Some of them have very wisely slipped over the whole work and duty of it, into a pleasing dream of perfection. And generally finding the fruitlessness of their attempt, and that indeed sin will not be mortified by the power of their light within, nor by their resolutions, nor by any of their austere outward appearances, nor peculiar habits or looks, which in this matter are openly pharisaical, they begin to give over their design. For who, among all that pretend to any reverence of God, do more openly indulge themselves unto covetousness, love of the world, emulation, strife, contentions among themselves, severe revenges against others, than they do; not to mention the filth and uncleanness they begin mutually to charge one another withal. And so will all self-devised ways of mortification end. It is the Spirit of God alone who leads us into the exercise of those duties whereby it may be carried on.

2. It is required, that the *duties* to be used unto this end be *rightly performed*, in *faith*, unto the glory of God. Without this, a multiplication of duties is an increase of burden and bondage, and that is all. Now that we can perform no duty in this way or manner, without the especial assistance of the Holy Spirit, hath been sufficiently before evinced: and the duties which are appointed of God in an especial manner unto this end, are prayer, meditation, watch-

fulness, abstinence, wisdom or circumspection with reference unto temptations and their prevalency. Not to go over these duties in particular, nor to shew wherein their especial efficacy unto this end and purpose doth consist, I shall only give some general rules concerning the exercising of our souls in them, and some directions for their right performance.

(1.) All these duties are to be designed and managed with an especial *respect unto this end.* It will not suffice that we are exercised in them in general, and with regard only unto this general end. We are to apply them unto this particular case, designing in and by them the mortification and ruin of sin. Especially, when by its especial actings in us, it discovers itself in a peculiar manner unto us. No man who wisely considereth himself, his state and condition, his occasions and temptations, can be wholly ignorant of his especial corruptions and inclinations, whereby he is ready for halting, as the psalmist speaks. He that is so, lives in the dark to himself, and walks at peradventures with God, not knowing how he walketh, nor whither he goeth. David probably had respect hereunto, when he said, 'I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God; for all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity;' Psal. xviii. 21—23. He could have done nothing of all this, nor have preserved his integrity in walking with God, had he not known, and kept a continual watch upon, his own iniquity, or that working of sin in him which most peculiarly inclined and disposed him unto evil. Upon this discovery are we to apply these duties in a particular manner to the weakening and ruin of the power of sin. As they are all useful and necessary, so the circumstances of our condition will direct us, which of them in particular we ought to be most conversant in. Sometimes prayer and meditation claim this place, as when our danger riseth solely from ourselves, and our own perverse inclinations, disorderly affections, or unruly passions; sometimes watchfulness and abstinence, when sin takes occasion from temptations, concerns, and businesses in the world; sometimes wisdom and circumspection, when the avoidance of temptations and opportunities for sin, is in an

especial manner required of us. These duties, I say, are to be managed with a peculiar design to oppose, defeat, and destroy the power of sin, into which they have a powerful influence as designed of God unto that end. For,

(2.) All these duties *rightly improved,* work two ways towards the end designed. [1.] Morally, and by way of impetration, namely, of help and assistance. [2.] Really, by an immediate opposition unto sin and its power, whence assimulation unto holiness doth arise.

[1.] These duties work *morally,* and by way of *impetration.* I shall instance only in one of them, and that is *prayer.* There are two parts of prayer with respect unto sin and its power. 1st. *Complaints.* 2ndly. *Petitions.*

1st. *Complaint.* So is the title of Psal. cii. 'The prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.' So David expresseth himself, Psal. lv. 2. 'Attend unto me, and hear me; I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise.' His prayer was a doleful lamentation. And Psal. cxlii. 2. 'I poured out my complaint before him, I shewed before him my trouble.' This is the first work of prayer, with respect unto sin, its power and prevalency. The soul therein pours out its complaints unto God, and sheweth before him the trouble it undergoes on the account thereof. And this it doth in an humble acknowledgment of its guilt, crying out of its deceit and violence. For all just and due complaint respecteth that which is grievous, and which is beyond the power of the complainer to relieve himself against. Of this sort there is nothing to be compared with the power of sin, as to believers.

This therefore is, and ought to be, the principal matter and subject of their complaints in prayer. Yea, the very nature of the whole case is such, as that the apostle could not give an account of it without great complaints; Rom. vii. 24. This part of prayer indeed is with profligate persons derided and scorned, but it is acceptable with God, and that wherein believers find ease and rest unto their souls. For, let the world scoff while it pleaseth, what is more acceptable unto God, than for his children, out of pure love unto him and holiness, out of fervent desires to comply with his mind and will, and thereby to attain conformity unto Jesus Christ, to

come with their complaints unto him, of the distance they are kept from these things by the captivating power of sins, bewailing their frail condition, and humbly acknowledging all the evils they are liable unto upon the account thereof? Would any man have thought it possible, had not experience convinced him, that so much Luciferian pride and atheism should possess the minds of any who would be esteemed Christians, as to scoff at and deride these things? That any one should ever read the Bible, or once consider what he is, and with whom he hath to do, and to be ignorant of this duty? But we have nothing to do with such persons, but to leave them to please themselves, whilst they may, with these fond and impious imaginations. They will come either in this world (which we hope and pray for), in their repentance to know their folly, or in another. I say, these complaints of sin, poured out before the Lord, these cryings out of deceit and violence, are acceptable to God, and prevalent with him to give out aid and assistance. He owns believers as his children, and hath the bowels and compassion of a father towards them; sin he knows to be their greatest enemy, and which fights directly against their souls. Will he then despise their complaints, and their bemoaning of themselves before him? will he not avenge them of that enemy, and that speedily? See Jer. xxxi. 18—20. Men who think they have no other enemies, none to complain of, but such as oppose them, or obstruct them, or oppress them in their secular interests, advantages, and concerns, are strangers unto these things. Believers look on sin as their greatest adversary, and know that they suffer more from it than from all the world: suffer them, therefore, to make their complaints of it unto him who pities them, who will relieve them and avenge them.

2ndly. Prayer is directly *petitions* to this purpose; it consists of petitions unto God, for supplies of grace to conflict and conquer sin withal. I need not prove this; no man prays as he ought, no man joins in prayer with another who prays as he ought, but these petitions are a part of his prayer. Especially will they be so, and ought they so to be, when the mind is peculiarly engaged in the design of destroying sin. And these petitions or requests are, as far as they are gracious and effectual, wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, who therein maketh 'intercession for us,' according 'to the will

of God.' And hereby doth he carry on this work of the mortification of sin, for his work it is. He makes us to put up prevalent requests unto God for such continual supplies of grace, whereby it may be constantly kept under, and at length destroyed. And this is the first way whereby this duty hath an influence into mortification, namely, morally and by way of impetration.

[2.] This duty hath *a real efficiency* unto the same end. It doth itself (when rightly performed, and duly attended unto) mightily prevail unto the weakening and destruction of sin. For in and by fervent prayer, especially when it is designed unto this end, the habit, frame, and inclinations of the soul unto universal holiness, with a detestation of all sin, are increased, cherished, and strengthened. The soul of a believer is never raised unto a higher intension of spirit in the pursuit of, love unto, and delight in, holiness, nor is more conformed unto it, or cast into the mould of it, than it is in prayer. And frequency in this duty, is a principal means to fix and consolidate the mind in the form and likeness of it; and hence do believers oft-times continue in, and come off from prayer above all impressions from sin, as to inclinations and compliances. Would such a frame always continue, how happy were we. But abiding in the duty is the best way of reaching out after it. I say, therefore, that this duty is really efficient of the mortification of sin, because therein all the graces whereby it is opposed and weakened, are excited, exercised, and improved unto that end; as also the detestation and abhorrency of sin is increased in us. And where this is not so, there are some secret flaws in the prayers of men, which it will be their wisdom to find out and heal.

Fourthly, The Holy Spirit carrieth on this work by applying in an especial manner the *death of Christ* unto us for that end. And this is another thing, which, because the world understandeth not, it doth despise. But yet in whomsoever the death of Christ is not the death of sin, he shall die in his sins. To evidence this truth, we may observe, 1. in general, That the *death of Christ* hath an especial *influence* into the *mortification* of sin, without which it will not be *mortified*. This is plainly enough testified unto in the Scripture. By his *cross*, that is, his *death* on the *cross*, 'we are crucified unto the world;' Gal. vi. 14. 'Our old man is crucified with him,

that the body of sin might be destroyed;' Rom. vi. 6. That is, sin is mortified in us by virtue of the death of Christ. 2. In the *death of Christ,* with respect unto sin there may be considered: (1.) His *oblation* of himself; and, (2.) The *application* thereof unto us. By the first it is, that our sins are expiated as unto their guilt; but from the latter it is, that they are actually subdued as to their power. For it is by an interest in, and a participation of, the benefits of his death, which we call the application of it unto us. Hereon are we said to be buried with him, and to rise with him, whereof our baptism is a pledge; Rom. vi. 3, 4. not in an outward representation, as some imagine of being dipped under the water, and taken up again (which were to make one sign the sign of another), but in a powerful participation of the virtue of the death and life of Christ, in a death unto sin, and newness of life in holy obedience, which baptism is a pledge of, as it is a token of our initiation and implanting into him. So are we said to be 'baptized into his death;' or into the likeness of it, that is, in its power; ver. 3. 3. The *old man* is said to *be crucified with Christ,* or sin to be mortified by the death of Christ, as was in part before observed on two accounts.

(1.) Of *conformity.* Christ is the head, the beginning or *idea,* of the new creation; the first-born of every creature. Whatever God designeth unto us therein, he first exemplified in Jesus Christ; 'and we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son;' Rom. viii. 29. Hereof the apostle gives us an express instance in the resurrection. 'Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming;' 1 Cor. xv. 23. It is so in all things; all that is wrought in us, it is in resemblance and conformity unto Christ. Particularly, we are by grace 'planted into the likeness of his death;' Rom. vi. 5. being 'made conformable unto his death;' Phil. iii. 10. and so to be 'dead with Christ;' Col. ii. 20. Now this conformity is not in our natural death, nor in our being put to death as he was; for it is that which we are made partakers of in this life, and that in a way of grace and mercy. But Christ died for sin, for our sin, which was the meritorious procuring cause thereof. and he lived again by the power of God. A likeness and conformity hereunto God will work in all believers. There is by nature a life of sin in them, as hath been declared. This

life must be destroyed, sin must die in us, and we thereby become dead unto sin. And as he rose again; so are we to be quickened in and unto newness of life. In this death of sin consists that mortification which we treat about; and without which we cannot be 'conformed unto Christ in his death,' which we are designed unto. And the same Spirit which wrought these things in Christ, will, in the pursuit of his design, work that which answers unto them in all his members.

(2.) In respect of *efficacy;* virtue goeth forth from the death of Christ, for the subduing and destruction of sin. It was not designed to be a dead, inactive, passive example, but it is accompanied with a power conforming and changing us into his own likeness. It is the ordinance of God unto that end, which he therefore gives efficacy unto. It is by a fellowship or participation in his sufferings, that we are made 'conformable to his death;' Phil. iii. 10. this κοινωνία τῶν παθημάτων, is an interest inthe benefit of his suffering; we also are made partakers thereof. This makes us conformable to his death, in the death of sin in us. The death of Christ is designed to be the death of sin; let them who are dead in sin deride it whilst they please. If Christ had not died, sin had never died in any sinner unto eternity. Wherefore, that there is a virtue and efficacy in the death of Christ unto this purpose, cannot be denied without a renunciation of all the benefits thereof. On the one hand the Scripture tells us, that he is our life, our spiritual life, the spring, fountain, and cause of it; we have nothing therefore that belongs thereunto but what is derived from him. They cast themselves out of the verge of Christianity, who suppose that the Lord Christ is no otherwise our life, or the author of life unto us, but as he hath revealed and taught the way of life unto us; he is our life as he is our head. And it would be a sorry head that should only teach the feet to go, and not communicate strength to the whole body so to do. And that we have real influences of life from Christ, I have sufficiently proved before. Until our spiritual life doth ensue the death of sin; for this on the other hand is peculiarly assigned unto his death in the testimonies before produced. This, therefore, is by virtue derived from Christ; that is, in an especial manner from his death, as the Scripture testifies.

All the inquiry is, *How the death of Christ is applied unto us;* or, which is the same, *How we apply ourselves to the death of Christ for this purpose.* And I answer, we do it two ways:

[1.] By *faith.* The way to derive virtue from Christ, is by touching of him. So the diseased woman in the gospel touched but the hem of his garment, and virtue went forth from him to stay her bloody issue; Matt. ix. 22. It was not her touching him outwardly, but her faith which she acted then and thereby, that derived virtue from him. For so our Saviour tells her in his answer, 'Daughter be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole.' But unto what end was this touching of his garment? It was only a pledge and token of the particular application of the healing power of Christ unto her soul, or her faith in him in particular for that end. For at the same time many thronged upon him in a press, so as his disciples marvelled he should ask 'who touched his clothes;' Mark v. 30, 31. yet was not any of them advantaged but the poor sick woman. A great emblem it is of common profession on the one hand, and especial faith on the other. Multitudes press and throng about Christ in a profession of faith and obedience, and in the real performance of many duties; but no virtue goeth forth from Christ to heal them. But when any one, though poor, though seemingly at a distance, gets but the least touch of him by especial faith, this soul is healed. This is our way with respect unto the mortification of sin. The Scripture assures us, that there is virtue and efficacy in the death of Christ unto that end. The means whereby we derive this virtue from him, is by touching of him; that is, by acting faith on him in his death, for the death of sin.

But how will this effect it, how will sin be mortified hereby? I say, how, by what power and virtue were they healed in the wilderness, who looked unto the brazen serpent? was it not because that was an ordinance of God, which by his almighty power he made effectual unto that purpose? The death of Christ being so as to the crucifying of sin, when it is looked on, or applied unto by faith, shall not divine virtue and power go forth unto that end? The Scripture, and experience of all believers, give testimony unto the truth and reality thereof. Besides, faith itself as acted on the death

of Christ, hath a peculiar efficacy unto the subduing of sin; for, 'beholding' him, thereby, 'as in a glass, we are changed into the same image;' 2 Cor. iii. 18. And that which we peculiarly behold, we are peculiarly transformed into the likeness of. And moreover, it is the only means whereby we actually derive from Christ the benefits of our union with him; from thence we have all grace, or, there is no such thing in the world. And the communication of it unto us, is in and by the actual exercise of faith principally. So it being acted with respect unto his death, we have grace for the killing of sin, and thereby become dead with him, crucified with him, buried with him, as in the testimonies before produced. This is that which we call the application of the death of Christ unto us, or our application of ourselves to the death of Christ for the mortification of sin. And they by whom this means thereof is despised or neglected, who are ignorant of it, or do blaspheme it, must live under the power of sin, unto what inventions soever they turn themselves for deliverance. According as we abide and abound herein, will be our success. Those who are careless and remiss in the exercise of faith, by prayer and meditation, in the way described, will find that sin will keep its ground, and maintain so much power in them as shall issue in their perpetual trouble. And men who are much conversant with the death of Christ, not in notions and lifeless speculations, not in natural or carnal affections, like those which are raised in weak persons, by images and crucifixes, but by holy actings of faith, with respect unto what is declared in the Scripture as to its power and efficacy, will be implanted into the likeness of it, and experience the death of sin in them continually.

[2.] We do it by *love*. Christ as crucified is the great object of our love, or should so be. For he is therein unto sinners altogether lovely. Hence one of the ancients cried out, ὁ ἔρως ἐμὸς εσταύρωται; 'My love is crucified, and why do I stay behind.' In the death of Christ, do his love, his grace, his condescension, most gloriously shine forth. We may, therefore, consider three things with respect unto this love: 1st. The *object* of it. 2ndly. The *means* of the representation of that object unto our minds and affections. 3rdly. The *effects* of it as to the case in hand.

1st. The *object* of it is Christ himself, in his unsearchable grace, his unspeakable love, his infinite condescension, his patient suffering, and victorious power, in his death, or dying for us. It is not his death absolutely, but *himself*, as all these graces conspicuously shine forth in his death, which is intended. 2ndly. And there are various ways whereby this may be represented unto our minds.

(1st.) Men may do it unto themselves by their own imaginations. They may frame and fancy dolorous things unto themselves about it, which is the way of persons under deep and devout superstitions. But no love in sincerity will ever be ingenerated towards Jesus Christ hereby. (2ndly.) It may be done by others, in pathetical and tragical declarations of the outward part of Christ's sufferings. Herein some have a great faculty to work upon the natural affections of their auditors; and great passions accompanied with tears and vows may be so excited. But for the most part, there is no more in this work, than what the same persons do find in themselves, it may be, in the reading or hearing of a feigned story. For there is a sympathy in natural affections with the things that are their proper objects, though represented by false imaginations. (3rdly.) It is done in the Papacy, and among some others, by images, in crucifixes and dolorous pictures, whereunto they pay great devotion, with an appearance of ardent affections. But none of these are such a due representation of this object, as to ingenerate sincere love towards Christ crucified in any soul. Wherefore, (4thly.) this is done effectually only by the gospel, and in the dispensation of it according to the mind of God. For therein is 'Jesus Christ evidently crucified before our eyes;' Gal. iii. 1. And this it doth by proposing unto our faith, the grace, the love, the patience, the condescension, the obedience, the end and design of Christ therein. So is Christ eyed by faith as the proper object of sincere love. And, being so stated, 3rdly. the effects of it, as of all true love, are, (1st.) *Adherence;* (2ndly.) *Assimilation.*

(1st.) *Adherence;* love in the Scripture is frequently expressed by this effect; the soul of one did *cleave,* or was *knit* unto another; as that of Jonathan to David; 1 Sam. xviii. 1. So it produceth a firm adherence unto

Christ crucified, that makes a soul to be in some sense always present with Christ on the cross. And hence, (2ndly.) ensues *assimilation* or conformity. None treat of the nature or effects of love, but they assign this as one of them, that it begets a likeness between the mind loving, and the object beloved. And so I am sure it is in this matter. A mind filled with the love of Christ as crucified, and represented in the manner and way before described, will be changed into its image and likeness, by the effectual mortification of sin, through a derivation of power and grace from thence for that purpose.

Fifthly, The Holy Ghost carrieth on this work by constant discoveries unto, and pressing on, believers, on the one hand, the *true nature* and *certain end* of sin; and on the other, the *beauty, excellency, usefulness,* and *necessity* of holiness, with the concerns of God, Christ, the gospel, and their own souls therein. A rational consideration of these things, is all the ground and reason of mortification in the judgments of some men. But we have proved, that there are other causes of it also. And now I add, that if we have no consideration of these things, but what our own reason is of itself able to suggest unto us, it will never be prevalent unto any sincere or permanent attempt in the mortification of any sin whatever. Let men make the best of their reason they can, in the searching and consideration of the perverse nature and dreadful consequents of sin, of the perfect peace and future blessedness which attendeth the practice of holiness, they will find an obstinacy and stubbornness in their hearts, not conquerable by any such reasonings or considerations; that conviction of sin and righteousness which is useful and prevalent unto that end and purpose, is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost; John xvi. 18. Although he makes use of our minds, understandings, reasons, consciences, and the best of our consideration in this matter, yet if he give not a peculiar efficacy and power unto all, the work will not be effectual. When he is pleased to make use of reasons and motives taken from the nature and end of sin and holiness, unto the mortification of sin, they shall hold good, and bind the soul unto this duty, against all objections and temptations that would divert it whatever.

And thus I have briefly, and I confess weakly and ob-

scurely, delineated the work of the Holy Ghost in the *sanctification* of them that do believe. Many things might have been more enlarged, and particularly inquired into; what have been discoursed, I judge sufficient to my present purpose. And I doubt not, but that what hath been argued from plain *Scripture* and *experience,* is sufficient, as to direct us in the practice of true *evangelical holiness,* so with all sober persons to cast out of all consideration that fulsome product of *pride* and *ignorance,* that all *gospel holiness* consists in the practice of *moral virtues.*

BOOK V.

NECESSITY OF HOLINESS

FROM

THE CONSIDERATION

OF

THE NATURE OF GOD.

CHAP. I.

The necessity of evangelical holiness owned by all Christians: doctrines falsely charged with an inconsistency with it. Though owned by all, yet practised by few, and disadvantageously pleaded for by many; the true nature of it briefly expressed. First argument for the necessity of holiness from the nature of God; frequently proposed unto our consideration for that end. This argument cogent and unavoidable; pressed with its limitation. Not the nature of God absolutely, but as he is in Christ, the foundation of this necessity, and a most effectual motive unto the same end; the nature and efficacy of that motive declared. The argument enforced, from the consideration of our conformity unto God by holiness; with that communion and likeness with him which depend thereon; with our future everlasting enjoyment of him. True force of that consideration vindicated; merit rejected, and the substitution of morality in the room of gospel holiness. False accusations of the doctrine of grace, discarded; and the neglect of the true means of promoting gospel obedience, charged. The principal argument farther enforced, from the pre-eminence of our natures and persons by this conformity to God; and our accesses unto God thereby, in order unto our eternal enjoyment of him: as it also alone renders us useful in this world unto others. Two sorts of graces, by whose exercise we grow into conformity with God; those that are assimilating, as faith and love; and those which are declarative of that assimilation, as goodness or benignity, and truth. An objection against the necessity of holiness, from the freedom and efficacy of grace, answered.

THAT wherewith I shall close this discourse, is, the consideration of the *necessity* of that *holiness* which we have thus far described, unto all persons who make profession of the

gospel, with the *reasons* of that necessity, and principal *motives* unto it. And for our encouragement in this part of our work, this *necessity* is such, as that it is by all sorts of Christians allowed, pleaded for, and the thing itself pretended unto. For, whereas the gospel is eminently, ἀληθεία, or διδασκαλία ἡ κατ' ἐυσέβειαν; 1 Tim. vi. 3. Tit. i. 1. 'The truth or doctrine which is according unto godliness,' or that which is designed and every way suited unto the attaining, furtherance, and practice of it, no men can with modesty refuse the trial of their doctrines by their tendency thereunto. But what is of that nature, or what is a hinderance thereunto, that many are not yet agreed about. The Socinians contend, that the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ doth overthrow the necessity of a holy life. The Papists say the same, concerning the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto our justification. The same charge is laid by others against the doctrine of the gratuitous election of God, the almighty efficacy of his grace in the conversion of sinners, and of his faithfulness in the preservation of true believers in their state of grace unto the end: on the other hand, the Scripture doth so place the foundations of all true and real holiness in these things, that without the faith of them, and an influence on our minds from them, it will not allow of any thing to be so called.

To examine the pretences of others concerning the suitableness of their doctrines unto the promotion of holiness, is not my present business. It is well that it hath always maintained a conviction of its necessity, and carried it through all different persuasions in Christianity. In this one thing alone almost, do all Christians agree; and yet, notwithstanding, the want of it, is, if not the only yet the principal thing, whereby the most who are so called, are ruined. So ordinary a thing is it, for men to agree for the necessity of holiness, and live in the neglect of it, when they have so done. Conviction comes in at an easy rate, as it were whether men will or no, but practice will stand them in pains, cost, and trouble. Wherefore, unto the due handling of this matter, some few things must be premised. As,

First, It is disadvantageous unto the interest of the gospel, to have men plead for holiness with weak incogent arguments, and such as are not taken out of the stores of its

truth, and so really affect not the consciences of men. And it is pernicious to all the concerns of holiness itself, to have that defended and pleaded for, under its name and title, which indeed is not so, but an usurper of its crown and dignity; which we shall afterward inquire into.

Secondly, It is uncomely and unworthy, to hear men contending for holiness, as the whole of our religion, and in the meantime, on all occasions, express in themselves a habit and frame of mind utterly inconsistent with what the Scripture so calls, and so esteems. There is certainly no readier way, on sundry accounts, to unteach men all the principles of religion, all respect unto God and common honesty. And if some men did this only, as being at variance with themselves, without reflections on others, it might the more easily be borne. But to see or hear men proclaiming themselves, in their whole course, to be proud, revengeful, worldly, sensual, neglecters of holy duties, scoffers at religion, and the power of it, pleading for a holy life, against the doctrine and practice of those who walked unblamably before the Lord in all his ways, yea, upon whose breasts and foreheads was written 'Holiness unto the Lord;' such as were most of the first reformed divines, whom they reflect upon, is a thing which all sober men do justly nauseate, and which God abhors. But the farther consideration hereof I shall at present omit, and pursue what I have proposed.

Thirdly, In my discourse concerning the *necessity* of holiness, with the grounds and reasons of it, and arguments for it, I shall confine myself unto these two things:

1. That the reasons, arguments, and motives, which I shall insist on, being such as are taken out of the gospel, or the Scripture, are not only consistent and compliant with the great doctrines of the *grace of God* in our free election, conversion, justification, and salvation by Jesus Christ, but such as *naturally flow* from them, discover what is their true nature and tendency in this matter.

2. That I shall at present suppose all along, what *that holiness* is which I do intend. Now this is not that *outward* show and pretence of it, which some plead for; not an attendance unto, or the observation of, *some* or all *moral virtues* only; not a readiness for some *acts of piety and charity*, from a superstitious proud conceit of their being *meritorious* of grace

or glory. But I intend that *holiness* which I have before described, which may be reduced to these three heads: (1.) An *internal change* or renovation of our souls, our minds, wills and affections by grace. (2.) A *universal compliance* with the will of God in all duties of obedience, and abstinence from sin, out of a principle of *faith* and *love*. (3.) A *designation* of all the *actions of life* unto the glory of God by Jesus Christ, according to the gospel: this is holiness; so to be, and so to do, is to be holy. And I shall divide my arguments into two sorts: 1. Such as prove the *necessity* of holiness as to the *essence* of it, holiness in our hearts and natures; 2. Such as prove the *necessity* of holiness as to the *degrees* of it, holiness in our lives and conversations.

I. First, then, *The nature of God* as revealed unto us, with our dependence on him, the obligation that is upon us to live unto him, with the nature of our blessedness in the enjoyment of him, do require indispensably that we should be *holy*. The holiness of God's nature is every where in the Scripture made the fundamental principle and reason of the necessity of holiness in us. Himself makes it the ground of his command for it; Lev. xi. 44. 'For I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy.' So also chap. xix. 2. xx. 7. And to shew the everlasting equity and force of this reason, it is transferred over to the gospel; 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. 'As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.' God lets them know, that his nature is such, as that unless they are sanctified and holy, there can be no such intercourse between him and them as ought to be between a God and his people. So he declares the sense of this enforcement of that precept to be; Lev. xi. 45. 'I brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God, ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.' Without this, the relation designed cannot be maintained, that I should be your God and you should be my people. To this purpose belongs that description given us of his nature, Psal. v. 4—6. 'For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight, thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak lying; the Lord will abhor the

bloody and deceitful man.' Answerable unto that of the prophet; 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity;' Hab. i. 13. He is such a God, that is, such is his nature, so pure, so holy, that previous to the consideration of any free acts of his will, it is evident, that he can take no pleasure in fools, liars, or workers of iniquity. Therefore Joshua tells the people, that if they continued in their sins, they could not serve the Lord, for he is a 'holy God;' chap. xxiv. 19. All the service of unholy persons towards this God, is utterly lost and cast away, because it is inconsistent with his own holiness to accept of it. And our apostle argues in the same manner; Heb. xii. 28, 29. 'Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.' He lays his argument for the necessity of grace and holiness in the worship of God, from the consideration of the holiness of his nature, which, as a consuming fire, will devour that which is unsuited unto it, inconsistent with it. There would be no end of pursuing this reason of the necessity of holiness, in all places where it is proposed expressly in the Scripture. I shall only add in general, that God of old strictly required, that no unholy, no unclean, no defiling thing should be in the camp of his people, because of his presence among them who is himself holy, and without an exact observance hereof he declares, that he will depart and leave them.

If we had no other argument to prove the necessity of holiness, and that it is indispensably required of us, but only this, that the God whom we serve and worship is absolutely holy, that his being and nature is such, as that we can have no delightful intercourse with any that are unholy, it were abundantly sufficient unto our purpose. He who resolveth not to be holy, had best seek another God to worship and serve, with our God he will never find acceptance. And therefore the Heathen, who gave up themselves unto all filthiness with delight and greediness, to stifle the notions of a divine being, that they might not control them in their sins and pleasures, fancied such gods to themselves as were wicked and unclean, that they might freely conform unto them, and serve them with satisfaction. And God himself lets us know, that men of wicked and flagitious lives, have some

secret thoughts that he is not holy, but like themselves; Psal. l. 21. For if they had not, they could not avoid it, but they must either think of leaving him or their sins.

But we must yet farther observe some things to evidence the force of this argument. As,

First, That unto us, in our present state and condition, the *holiness of God* as absolutely considered, merely as an infinite eternal property of the divine nature, is not the immediate ground of, and motive unto, holiness, but it is the *holiness of God* as *manifested* and *revealed* unto us in *Christ Jesus*. Under the first consideration, we who are sinners can make no conclusion from it, but that of Joshua, 'He is a holy God, a jealous God, he will not forgive their iniquities, nor spare.' This we may learn indeed from thence, that nothing which is unholy can possibly subsist before him, or find acceptance with him. But a motive and encouragement unto any holiness that is not absolutely perfect, no creature can take from the consideration thereof. And we do not, we ought not to, urge any such argument for the necessity of holiness, as cannot be answered and complied with by the grace of God as to the substance, though we come short in the degrees of it. My meaning is, that no argument can be rationally and usefully pleaded for the necessity of holiness, which doth not contain in itself an encouraging motive unto it. To declare it necessary for us, and at the same time impossible unto us, is not to promote its interest. They understand neither the holiness of God nor man, who suppose that they are absolutely and immediately suited unto one another, or that, under that notion of it, we can take any encouraging motive unto our duty herein. Nay, no creature is capable of such a perfection in holiness, as absolutely to answer the infinite purity of the divine nature, without a covenant-condescension; Job iv. 18. xv. 15. But it is the holiness of God as he is in Christ, and as in Christ represented unto us, that gives us both the necessity and motive unto ours.

Wherefore, God, in dealing with his people of old in this matter, did not propose unto them to this end the absolute perfection of his own nature, but his being *holy, as he dwelt among them,* and *was their God;* that is, in covenant, both which had respect unto Jesus Christ. In him all the glo-

rious perfections of God are so represented unto us, as we may not thence only *learn* our duty, but also be *encouraged* unto it. For,

1. All the *properties* of God as so represented unto us, are more *conspicuous, resplendent, alluring*, and *attractive*, than as *absolutely* considered. I know not what light into, and knowledge of, the divine perfections, Adam had in his state of innocency, when God had declared himself only in the works of nature; sufficient no doubt it was to guide him in his love and obedience, or that life which he was to live unto him. But I know that now, all our knowledge of God and his properties, unless it be that which we have in and by Jesus Christ, is insufficient to lead or conduct us in that life of faith and obedience, which is necessary unto us. He, therefore, gives us the 'light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ;' 2 Cor. iv. 6. that is, clear manifestations of his glorious excellencies. The light of the knowledge hereof is a clear, useful, saving perception and understanding of them. And this is not only directive unto holiness, but also effective of it. For thus beholding the glory of the Lord, we are 'changed into the same image, from glory to glory;' chap. iii. 18.

2. In particular. The *fiery holiness of God*, is represented unto us in Christ, so, as that although it lose nothing of declaring the indispensable necessity of *holiness* in all that draw nigh to him, yet under such a *contemperation* with *goodness, grace, love, mercy, condescension*, as may invite and encourage us to endeavour after a *conformity* thereunto.

3. Together with a representation of the *holiness of God* in *Christ*, there is a *revelation* made of *what holiness* in us he doth require, and will accept. As was observed before, the consideration of it absolutely neither requires nor admits of any but that which is absolutely perfect, and where there is any one failing, the whole of what we do is condemned; James ii. 10. This, therefore, can only perplex and torture the soul of a sinner, by pressing on him at the same time the necessity and impossibility of holiness; Isa. xxxiii. 14. But now as God is in Christ, through his interposition and mediation, he accepts of such a holiness in us, as we are capable of, and which no man hath any discouragement from endeavouring to attain.

4. There is, in and by *Christ*, declared and administered a *spiritual power of grace*, which shall work this *holiness* in us, or that conformity unto the holiness of God which he doth require. From this fountain therefore we draw immediately as the reasons of the necessity, so prevalent motives unto holiness in our souls. Hence some things may be inferenced. As, (1.) That the mediation of *Christ*, and in particular his satisfaction, is so far from being a hinderance of, or a *discouragement* unto *holiness*, as some blasphemously pretend, that the great fundamental reason of it in us, namely, the holiness of God himself, can have no influence upon us, without the supposition of it and faith in it; unless faith be built hereon, no sinner upon a view of God's holiness as absolutely considered, can have any other thoughts but those of Cain, 'My sin is great it cannot be pardoned.' God is a holy God, I cannot serve him, and therefore will depart out of his presence. But the holiness of God as manifested in Jesus Christ, including a supposition of satisfaction made unto what is required by its absolute purity, and a condescension thereon to accept, in him, that holiness of truth and sincerity which we are capable of, doth equally maintain the indispensable necessity of it, and encourage us unto it. And we may see what contrary conclusions will be made on these different considerations of it. Those who view it only in the first way, can come to no other issue in their thoughts but that which they express in the prophet; Isa. xxxiii. 14. 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall inhabit with everlasting burnings.' God's fiery holiness serves towards them unto no other end but to fill them with terror and despair. But other inferences are natural from the consideration of the same holiness, in the latter way. 'Our God,' saith the apostle, 'is a consuming fire;' what then, what follows as our duty thereon? 'Let us have grace whereby we may serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear;' Heb. xii. 28, 29. There is no such forcible reason for, no such powerful motive unto, our adherence unto him in holy obedience. Such different conclusions will men make from these different considerations of the holiness of God, when once they come to be serious and in good earnest about them.

(2.) It follows from hence also, that our holiness under

the new covenant, although it have the same general nature and one principal end with that which was required in the covenant of works, yet as it hath an especial spring and fountain, which that had not, and relates unto sundry causes which the other had no concernment in, so it is not of the same especial use therewith. The immediate end and use of that holiness in us, was to answer the holiness of God absolutely as expressed in the law, whereon we should have been justified. This is now done for us by Christ alone, and the holiness which God requireth of us, respects only those ends which God hath proposed unto us, in compliance with his own holiness, as he will glorify it in Jesus Christ; which must be afterward declared.

Secondly, We may consider in what particular *instances* the force of this argument is conveyed unto us, or what are the especial reasons why we ought to *be holy because God is so.* And they are three.

1. Because herein consists all that *conformity* unto God, whereof in this world we are capable, which is our *privilege, pre-eminence, glory,* and *honour.* We were originally created in the image and likeness of God. Herein consisted the privilege, pre-eminence, order, and blessedness of our first state; and that for the substance of it, it was no other but our holiness, is by all confessed. Wherefore, without this conformity unto God, without the impress of his image and likeness upon us, we do not, we cannot, stand in that relation unto God which was designed us in our creation. This we lost by the entrance of sin. And if there be not a way for us to acquire it again, if we do not so, we shall always come short of the glory of God, and of the end of our creation. Now this is done in and by holiness alone, for therein consists the renovation of the image of God in us, as our apostle expressly declares; Eph. iv. 22—24. with Col. iii. 10. It is, therefore, to no purpose for any man to expect an interest in God, or any thing that will prove eternally to his advantage, who doth not endeavour after conformity unto him. For such a man despiseth all the glory that God designed unto himself in our creation, and all that was eminent and peculiarly bestowed upon ourselves.

He, therefore, whose design is not to be like unto God, according to his measure, and the capacity of a creature,

always misseth both of his end, his rule, and his way. Our Saviour would have his disciples to do all things so, as that they may be the 'children of their heavenly Father;' Matt. v. 45. that is, like him, representing him, as children do their father. And the truth is, if this necessity of conformity unto God be once out of our view and consideration, we are easily turned aside by the meanest temptation we meet withal. In brief, without that likeness and conformity unto God, which consists in holiness, as we do under his eye bear the image of his great adversary the devil, so we can have no especial interest in him, nor hath he any in us.

2. The force of the argument ariseth from the respect it bears unto our actual *intercourse* and *communion with God:* this we are *called* unto, and this in all our duties of obedience we must endeavour to attain. If there be not in them a real intercourse between God and our souls, they are all but uncertain beatings of the air. When we are accepted in them, when God is glorified by them, then have we in them this intercourse and communion with God. Now whereas God is holy, if we are not in our measure holy according to his mind, this cannot be. For God neither accepts of any duties from unholy persons, nor is he glorified by them; and, therefore, as unto these ends doth he expressly reject and condemn them. It is a good duty to 'preach the word;' but 'unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee;' Psal. l. 16, 17. Seeing thou art unholy. To pray is a good duty; but unto them that are not 'washed' and made 'clean,' and 'put not away the evil of their doings from before his eyes,' saith God, 'When ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you, and when ye make many prayers I will not hear;' Isa. i. 15, 16. And the like may be said of all other duties whatever.

It is certain, therefore, that whereas God is holy, if we are not so, all the duties which we design or intend to perform towards him, are everlastingly lost, as unto their proper ends. For there is no intercourse nor communion between light and darkness: 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all; and if we say, We have fellowship with him,

and walk in darkness,' as all unholy persons do, 'we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Christ Jesus;' 1 John i. 6, 7. 3. Now what man that shall consider this, unless he be infatuated, would for the love of any one sin, or out of conformity to the world, or any other thing, whereby the essence and truth of holiness is impeached, utterly lose and forfeit all the benefit and fruit of all those duties wherein perhaps he hath laboured, and which he hath, it may be, been at no small charge withal. But yet this is the condition of all men, who come short in any thing that is essentially necessary unto universal holiness. All they do, all they suffer, all the pains they take in and about religious duties, all their compliance with convictions, and what they do therein within doors and without, is all lost, as unto the great ends of the glory of God, and their own eternal blessedness, as sure as God is holy.

3. It ariseth from a respect unto our future *everlasting enjoyment* of him. This is our utmost end, which if we come short of (life itself is the greatest loss), better ten thousand times we had never been. For without it, a continuance in everlasting miseries is inseparable from our state and condition. Now this is never attainable by any unholy person. 'Follow holiness,' saith our apostle, 'without which no man shall see God.' For it is the 'pure in heart only,' that shall see God; Matt. v. 8. It is hereby that we are 'made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light;' Col. i. 12. Neither can we attain it before we are thus made meet for it. No unclean thing, nothing that defileth or is defiled, shall ever be brought into the glorious presence of this holy God. There is no imagination wherewith mankind is besotted, more foolish, none so pernicious as this, that persons not purified, not sanctified, not made holy in this life, should afterward be taken into that state of blessedness which consists in the enjoyment of God. There can be no thought more reproachful to his glory, nor more inconsistent with the nature of the things themselves. For neither can such persons enjoy him, nor would God himself be a reward unto them. They can have nothing whereby they should adhere unto him as their chiefest good, nor can see any thing in

him that should give them rest or satisfaction; nor can there be any medium whereby God should communicate himself unto them, supposing them to continue thus unholy, as all must do who depart out of this life in that condition. Holiness indeed is perfected in heaven, but the beginning of it is inviolably and unalterably confined to this world; and where this fails, no hand shall be put unto that work unto eternity. All unholy persons, therefore, who feed and refresh themselves with hopes of heaven and eternity, do it merely on false notions of God and blessedness, whereby they deceive themselves. Heaven is a place where as well they would not be, as they cannot be; in itself it is neither desired by them, nor fit for them. 'He that hath this hope' indeed, that he shall see God, 'purifieth himself even as he is pure;' 1 John iii. 2, 3. There is, therefore, a manifold necessity of holiness impressed on us, from the consideration of the nature of that God whom we serve and hope to enjoy, which is holy.

I cannot pass over this consideration, without making some especial *improvement* of it. We have seen how all our concernment and interest in God both here and hereafter, do depend on our being holy. They invented a very effectual means for the prejudicing, yea, indeed a fatal engine for the ruin of true holiness in the world, who built it on no other bottom, nor pressed it on any other motive, but that the acts and fruits of it were meritorious in the sight of God. For whether this be believed and complied withal or not, true holiness is ruined, if no other more effectual reason be substituted in its room. Reject this motive, and there is no need of it; which I am persuaded hath really taken place in many, who being taught that good deeds are not meritorious, have concluded them useless. Comply with it, and you destroy the nature of true holiness, and turn all the pretended duties of it into fruits and effects of spiritual pride, and blind superstition. But we see the necessity of it with respect unto God, hath other foundations suited unto, and consistent with, the grace and love and mercy of the gospel. And we shall fully shew in our progress, that there is not one motive unto it, that is of any real force or efficacy, but perfectly complies with the whole doctrine of the free undeserved grace of God towards us by Jesus Christ; nor is there any

of them which gives the least countenance unto any thing of worth in ourselves, as from ourselves, or that should take us off from an absolute and universal dependance on Christ for life and salvation. But yet such they are, as render it as necessary unto us to be holy, that is, to be sanctified, as to be justified. He that thinks to please God, and to come to the enjoyment of him without holiness, makes him an unholy God, putting the highest indignity and dishonour imaginable upon him. God deliver poor sinners from this deceit. There is no remedy, you must leave your sins, or your God. You may as easily reconcile heaven and hell, the one remaining heaven and the other hell, as easily take away all difference between light and darkness, good and evil, as procure acceptance for unholy persons with our God. Some live without God in the world; whether they have any notion of his being or no, is not material: they live without any regard unto him, either as unto his present rule over them, or his future disposal of them. It is no wonder if holiness, both name and thing, be universally despised by these persons; their design being to serve their lusts to the utmost, and immerse themselves in the pleasures of the world, without once taking God into their thoughts, they can do no otherwise. But for men who live under some constant sense of God, and an eternal accountableness unto him, and thereon do many things he requires, and abstain from many sins that their inclinations and opportunities would suggest and prompt them unto, not to endeavour after that universal holiness, which alone will be accepted with him, is a deplorable folly. Such men seem to worship an idol all their days. For he that doth not endeavour to be like unto God, doth contrarily think wickedly that God is like unto himself. It is true, our interest in God is not built upon our holiness, but it is as true that we have none without it. Were this principle once well fixed in the minds of men, that without holiness no man shall see God, and that enforced from the consideration of the nature of God himself, it could not but influence them unto a greater diligence about it, than the most seem to be engaged in.

There is indeed amongst us a great plea for morality, or for moral virtue; I wish it be more out of love to virtue itself, and a conviction of its usefulness, than out of a design to

cast contempt on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel, as it is declared by the faithful dispensers of it. However, we are bound to believe the best of all men. Where we see those who so plead for moral virtues, to be in their own persons, and in their lives, modest, sober, humble, patient, self-denying, charitable, useful towards all, we are obliged to believe, that their pleas for moral virtue proceed from a love and liking of it. But where men are proud, furious, worldly, revengeful, profane, intemperate, covetous, ambitious, I cannot so well understand their declamations about virtue. Only I would for the present inquire, what it is that they intend by their morality. Is it the renovation of the image of God in us by grace? is it our conformity from thence unto him in his holiness? is it our being holy in all manner of holiness, because God is holy? is it the acting of our souls in all duties of obedience, from a principle of faith and love, according to the will of God, whereby we have communion with him here, and are led towards the enjoyment of him? If these are the things which they intend, what is the matter with them? why are they so afraid of the words and expressions of the Scripture? Why will they not speak of the things of God in words that the Holy Ghost teacheth? Men never dislike the words of God but when they dislike the things of God; is it because these expressions are not intelligible, people do not know what they mean, but this of moral virtue they understand well enough? We appeal to the experience of all that truly fear God in the world unto the contrary. There is none of them, but the Scripture expressions of the causes, nature, work, and effects of holiness, do convey a clear experimental apprehension of them unto their minds: whereas, by their moral virtue, neither themselves, nor any else, do know what they intend, since they do, or must reject the common received notion of it, for honesty amongst men. If, therefore, they intend that holiness hereby which is required of us in the Scripture, and that particularly on the account of the holiness of that God whom we serve, they fall into a high contempt of the wisdom of God, in despising of those notices and expressions of it, which being used by the Holy Ghost, are suited unto the spiritual light and understanding of believers; substituting their own arbitrary, doubtful, uncertain sentiments and

words in their room and place. But if it be something else which they intend (as indeed evidently it is, nor doth any man understand more in the design than sobriety and usefulness in the world, things singularly good in their proper place), then it is no otherwise to be looked on, but as a design of Satan to undermine the true holiness of the gospel, and to substitute a deceitful and deceiving cloud or shadow in the room of it.

And, moreover, what we have already discoursed, doth abundantly evince the folly and falsehood of those clamorous accusations, wherein the most important truths of the gospel are charged as inconsistent with, and as repugnant unto, holiness. The doctrine, say the Socinians, of the satisfaction of Christ, ruins all care and endeavours after a holy life: for when men do believe that Christ hath satisfied the justice of God for their sins, they will be inclined to be careless about them, yea, to live in them. But as this supposition doth transform believers into monsters of ingratitude and folly, so it is built on no other foundation than this, that if Christ take away the guilt of sin, there is no reason in the nature of these things, nor mentioned in the Scripture, why we should need to be holy, and keep ourselves from the power, filth, and dominion of sin, or any way glorify God in this world; which is an inference weak, false, and ridiculous. The Papists and others with them, lay the same charge on the doctrine of justification through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto us. And it is wonderful to consider with what virulent railing this charge is managed by the Papists, so with what scorn and scoffing, with what stories and tales, some amongst ourselves endeavour to expose this sacred truth to contempt, as though all those by whom it is believed, must consequently be negligent of holiness and good works. Now, although I deny not, but that such men may find a great strength of connexion, between these things in their own minds, seeing there is a principle in the corrupt heart of men, to 'turn the grace of God into lasciviousness;' yet (as shall in due time be proved) this sacred truth is both doctrinally and practically the great constraining principle unto holiness and fruitfulness in obedience. For the present I shall return no other answer unto those objections, but that the objectors are wholly mistaken in our

thoughts and apprehensions, concerning that God whom we serve. God in Christ whom we worship, hath so revealed his own holiness unto us, and what is necessary for us on the account thereof, as that we know it to be a foolish, wicked, and blasphemous thing, for any one to think to please him, to be accepted with him, to come to the enjoyment of him, without that holiness which he requireth, and from his own nature cannot but require. That the grace, or mercy, or love, of this God, who is our God, should encourage those who indeed know him unto sin, or countenance them in a neglect of holy obedience to him, is a monstrous imagination. There are, as I shall shew afterward, other invincible reasons for it, and the motives unto it. But the owning of this one consideration alone, by them who believe the grace of the gospel, is sufficient to secure them from the reproach of this objection.

Moreover, from what hath been discoursed, we may all charge ourselves with blame, for our sloth and negligence in this matter. It is to be feared, that we have none of us endeavoured as we ought, to grow up into this image and likeness of God. And although for the main of our duty herein, our hearts may not condemn us, yet there are no doubt sundry things that belong unto it, wherein we have all failed. Our likeness unto God, that wherein we bear his image, is our holiness, as hath been declared. Wherever there is the holiness of truth before described, in the essence of it, there is a radical conformity and likeness unto God. In the first communication of it unto us, through the promises of the gospel, we are made partakers τῆς θείας φύσεως, 'of the divine nature;' 2 Pet. i. 4. Such a new spiritual nature as represents that of God himself: being begotten by him, we are made partakers of his nature. But though all children do partake of the nature of their parents, yet they may be, and some of them are, very deformed, and bear very little of their likeness. So is it in this matter; we may have the image of God in our hearts, and yet come short of that likeness unto him in its degrees and improvement which we ought to aim at. And this happens two ways: (1.) When our graces are weak, withering, and unthrifty; for in their flourishing and fruit-bearing, is our likeness unto God evidenced, and in them doth the glory of God in this world

consist. (2.) When by the power of our corruptions or our temptations, we contract a deformity; something that hath the likeness of the old crooked serpent. Where either of these befall us, that our graces are low and thriftless; that our corruptions are high and active, frequently discovering themselves; there, though the image of God may be in us, there is not much of his likeness upon us, and we come short of our duty, in this great and fundamental duty of our faith and profession. So far as it is thus with us, may we not, ought we not, greatly to blame ourselves? Why are we so slow, so negligent in the pursuit of our principal interest and happiness? Why do we suffer every thing, why do we suffer any thing, to divert our minds from, or retard our endeavours in, this design? Wherefore, that I may contribute something to the awakening of our diligence herein, I shall add some few *motives* unto it, and some *directions* for it, that herein we may be found 'perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord,' which is the only way whereby we may be like unto him, in this world.

First, In our *likeness* unto God, consists the excellency and pre-eminence of our *nature*, above that of all other creatures in the world, and of our *persons* above those of other men, who are not partakers of his *image*.

For, 1. with reference unto other things, this is the highest excellency that a *created nature* is capable of. Other things had external impressions of the greatness, power, and goodness of God upon them; man alone in this lower world was capable of the image of God in him. The perfection, the glory, the pre-eminence of our nature in the first creation, was expressed only by this, that we were made in the 'image and likeness of God;' Gen. i. 26, 27. This gave us a pre-eminence above all other creatures, and hence a dominion over them ensued. For, although God made a distinct grant of it unto us, that we might the better understand and be thankful for our privilege; yet was it a necessary consequence of his image in us. And this is that which James respects, where he tells us, that *πᾶσα φύσις*, 'every nature,' the nature of all things in their several kinds, *δαμάζεται τῇ φύσει τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ*, 'is tamed,' that is, subjected to the nature of man. He renders כבש, Gen. i. 28. by *δαμάζω*, which the LXX. render *κατακυριέυω*, 'subdue it.' But being not

contented to be like God, that is, in holiness and righteousness, we would be as God in wisdom and sovereignty; and not attaining what we aimed at, we lost what we had; Gen. iii. 5. Being in 'honour we continued not, but became like the beasts that perish;' Psal. xlix. 12. we were first like God, and then 'like beasts;' 2 Pet. ii. 12. By the loss of the image of God, our nature lost its pre-eminence, and we were reduced into order amongst perishing beasts. For notwithstanding some feeble relics of this image yet abiding with us, we have really, with respect unto our proper end, in our lapsed condition, more of the bestial nature in us, than of the divine. Wherefore, the restoration of this image in us by the grace of Jesus Christ,' Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10. is the recovery of that pre-eminence and privilege of our nature which we had foolishly lost. Hereby there is an impression again made upon our natures of the authority of God, which gives us a pre-eminence above other creatures, and a rule over them; yea, that whole dominion which mankind scrambles for with craft and violence, over the residue of the creation, depends on this renovation of the image of God in some of them. Not that I judge that men's right and title to their portion and interests in this world, doth depend on their own personal grace or holiness; but that if God had not designed to renew his image in our nature by Jesus Christ, and as the foundation thereof to take our nature into union with himself in the person of his Son, and thereby to gather up all things unto a new head in him, and to make him the first-born of the creation, the head and heir of all, he would not have continued any thing of right or title therein. It was upon the promise, and the establishment of the new covenant, that this right was restored unto us. So it is expressed in the renovation of the covenant with Noah and his children, Gen. ix. 1, 2. 'God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all that moveth on the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea: into your hand are they delivered;' which is an express renovation of the grant made unto us at our first creation; Gen. i. 28. The right whereunto we had lost, in our loss of the image of God. And therefore, in that service

wherein the creature is continued unto mankind, it is made subject to vanity, and put into bondage, in which state, though it groan, and look out, as it were, for deliverance, it must continue until God hath accomplished the whole design of the glorious 'liberty of his children;' Rom. viii. 20, 21. Whatever they may pride themselves in, their parts or enjoyments, however they may sport themselves in the use or abuse of other creatures, if this image of God be not renewed in them, they have really no great pre-eminence above the things which perish under their hands; 2 Pet. ii. 12. God having exalted our natures by union with himself in the person of his Son, requires of us to preserve its dignity above others.

2. Again, this is that which gives privilege and pre-eminence unto the *persons* of some above others; 'the righteous,' saith the wise man, 'is more excellent than his neighbour;' Prov. xii. 26. It is seldom that this is so upon the account of civil wisdom, wealth, greatness, or power. There is nothing can establish this general rule, but their conformity and likeness to God. Hence are such persons called the 'saints in the earth, and the excellent;' Psal. xvi. 3. Both the terms קדושים and קדירים, do first belong properly to God. He above is absolutely קדוש or 'holy;' and he is אדיר, Psal. viii. 2. unto men they are ascribed upon their likeness unto him in holiness. This makes them the 'saints and excellent in the earth,' that gives them a pre-eminence of office and authority in some above others. And this dignity of office reflects a dignity of person on them who are vested in it, and communicates a pre-eminence unto them; for their office and authority is from God, which gives both it and them a real privilege and honour above others. But that which is originally in and from persons themselves, is solely from the renovation of the image of God in them, and is heightened and increased according to the degrees they attain in the participation of it. The more holy, the more honourable. Hence wicked men in the Scripture are said to be vile, זלות לבני אדם; Psal. xii. 8. *Quisquiliæ hominum*, 'trifling vilenesses;' and the righteous are said to be precious and valuable. And hence it is, that there hath oft-times an awe been put on the spirits of vile and outrageous sinners, from the appearances of God in holy persons. And indeed at all

times, where men do eminently bear a conformity to God in holiness, wicked men exasperated by their secular interests, prejudices, and an unconquerable adherence to their lusts, may oppose, revile, reproach, and persecute them, but secretly in their hearts they have an awe from the likeness of God in them, whence they will sometimes dread them, sometimes flatter them, and sometimes wish that they were not, even as they deal with God himself. Why do we weary ourselves about other things? Why do we spend our labour in vain, and our strength for that 'which is not bread?' such will all endeavours after any other excellency at length appear.

Herein lies the whole of that dignity which our nature was made for, and is capable of; sin is the sole debasement of it, that alone whereby we render ourselves base and contemptible. Men's self-pleasing in the ways and fruits of it, or in worldly advantages, and their mutual applauses of one another, will suddenly vanish into smoke. It is holiness alone that is honourable, and that because there is in it the image and representation of God. I think we are satisfied, that the dignity of professors above others, doth not consist in worldly or secular advantages, for they are very few who have them; 'not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called;' 1 Cor. i. 26. nor doth it consist in spiritual gifts; many who have excelled us, not only in the degree of them, but in the kind also, who have had extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, shall be shut out of heaven with the worst of the world; Matt. vii. 22. 'Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name wrought *δυνάμεις πολλὰς*, many miraculous works?' which is more than any of us can say; yet Christ will 'profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity,' you unholy persons. Nor is it in profession itself. Many make it in rigid austerities, renunciation of the world, and outward works of charity, beyond the most of us, and yet perish in their superstitions. Nor is it in the purity of worship, without such mixtures of human inventions as others defile the service of God withal. For multitudes may be made partakers thereof in the 'great house of God,' and yet be 'vessels of wood and stone,' who being 'not purged from sin,' are not 'vessels to honour, sanctified and meet for

the master's use;' 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21. It consists, therefore, alone in that likeness unto God, which we have in and by holiness, with what doth attend it, and is inseparable from it. Where this is not, no other thing will exempt us from the common herd of perishing mankind.

Secondly, According unto our *growth* and *improvement* in this *likeness* unto God, are our accesses and approaches towards glory. We are drawing every day towards our natural end whether we will or no; and if we do not therewithal draw nearer towards our supernatural end in glory, we are most miserable. Now men do but deceive themselves, if they suppose that they are approaching towards glory in time, if they are not at the same time making nearer unto it in grace; it is some representation of future glory, that therein we shall be ἰσάγγελοι; Luke xx. 36. 'like, or equal unto angels.' But that respects one particular only of that state. It is a far more excellent description of it, that we shall be like unto God, 'when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;' 1 John iii. 2. Our glory as subjectively considered, will be our likeness unto God according to the capacity of creatures. And it is the highest folly for any to think that they shall love that hereafter, which now they hate; that that will be their glory which they now abhor; such sottish contradictions are the minds of men filled withal. There is nothing in this world which they more despise, than to be like unto God, and they hate every one that is so; yet pretend a desire and expectation of that estate wherein they shall be so, which is a being so for ever. But this will be our glory; 'to behold the face of God in righteousness, and to be satisfied with his likeness;' Psal. xvii. 15. How then shall we make approaches towards this glory spiritually; which at least may answer the approaches we make towards our ends naturally, seeing not to do so, is folly and intolerable negligence? We have no other way, but thriving and growing in that likeness of God which we have here in holiness. Hereby alone are we 'transformed into the image of God, from glory to glory;' 2 Cor. iii. 18. From one glorious degree of grace unto another, until one great change shall issue all grace and holiness in eternal glory: and in our desires for heaven, if they are regular, we consider not so much our freedom from trouble

as from sin; nor is our aim in the first place so much at complete happiness, as perfect holiness. And they who desire heaven, as that which would only ease them of their troubles, and not as that which will perfectly free them of sin; will fall into a state wherein sin and trouble shall be eternally inseparable. As, therefore, we would continually tend towards our rest and blessedness, as we would have assured and evident pledges of it in our own souls, as we would have foretastes of it, and an experimental acquaintance with it (as who would not know as much as is possible of his eternal blessedness), this is the design which we ought to pursue. It is to be feared, that the most of us know not how much of glory may be in present grace, nor how much of heaven may be attained in holiness on the earth. We have a generation amongst us, that would fain be boasting of perfection, whilst in their minds they are evidently under the power of darkness, corrupt in their affections, and worldly in their lives. But our duty it is, to be always 'perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.' This pursued in a due manner, is continually transforming the soul into the likeness of God. Much of the glory of heaven may dwell in a simple cottage. And poor persons, even under rags, may be very like unto God.

Thirdly, It is from our *likeness* and *conformity* unto God alone, that we are, or may be *useful* in the world, in a due manner and order. I shall have occasion to speak more unto this afterward, and shall therefore here only touch upon it, with respect unto one concernment or circumstance. God is the great preserver and benefactor of the whole creation: he is good and doth good, the sole cause and fountain of all good, that in any kind, any creature is made partaker of. And there is no property of God more celebrated in the Scripture than this of his goodness, and his giving out of the fruits of it to all his creatures. And he is so only good, that there is nothing so in any sense but by a participation of it, and a likeness unto him therein. They, therefore, who are like unto God, and they only, are useful in this world. There is indeed, or at least there hath been, much good, useful good done by others, on various convictions, and for various ends: but there is one flaw or other in all they do. Either superstition, or vain-glory, or selfishness, or merit, or one

thing or other, gets into all the good that is done by unholy persons, and brings death into the pot, so that although it may be of some use in particulars, unto individual persons, in some seasons, it is of none unto the general good of the whole. He that bears the likeness of God, and in all that he doth acts from that principle, he alone is truly useful, represents God in what he doth, and spoils it not by false ends of his own. If, therefore, we would keep up the privilege and pre-eminence of our nature and persons, if we would make due and daily accessions towards glory and blessedness, if we would be of any real use in this world, our great endeavour ought to be, to grow up more and more into this likeness of God, which consists in our holiness.

It will, therefore, or it may, be justly here inquired, *how* or *what* we may do, that we may *thrive* and *grow* up more and more into this *likeness* unto God. To remit other considerations unto their proper place, at present I answer, that there are some graces of holiness that are effectually *assimilating*, and others that are *declarative*, and expressive of this likeness of God in us.

First, Those of the first sort, which have a peculiar efficacy to promote the *likeness of God* in our souls, are *faith* and *love*, in whose constant exercise we ought to abide and abound, if we intend to *grow* in *likeness* and conformity to God.

1. *Faith* is a part of our *holiness*, as it is a *grace* of the sanctifying Spirit, and it is a *principle* of holiness as it *purifies* the heart, and is effectual by *love*. The more faith is in its due and proper exercise, the more holy we shall be, and consequently the more like unto God. This were a large theme, I shall confine it unto one instance. The glorious properties of God, as we have shewed before, are manifested and revealed in Jesus Christ, 'in his face do they shine forth.' The only way whereby we behold them, whereby we have an intuition into them, is by faith. In Christ are the glorious excellencies of God represented unto us, and by faith do we behold them. And what is the effect hereof? 'we are changed into the same image and likeness, from glory to glory;' 2 Cor. iii. 18. This is the great mystery of growing in holiness, and thriving in the image of God, which the world being ignorant of, have la-

boured in vain, by other means, to satisfy their notions and convictions. But this is the great way and means of it, appointed and blessed of God unto that purpose; namely, constantly by faith, in a way of believing the revelation made in the gospel, to view, behold, and contemplate on the excellencies of God, his goodness, holiness, righteousness, love, and grace, as manifested in Jesus Christ; and that so as to make use of, and apply unto ourselves and our condition, the effects and fruits of them, according to the promise of the gospel. This is the great *arcanum* of growing up into the likeness of God; without which, however men may multiply duties in a compliance with their convictions, they will have never the more conformity to God. And all professors who come short in this matter, do, or may, know, that it ariseth from their want of a constant exercise of faith on God in Christ. If, therefore, we have a real design, of being yet more like unto God, which is our privilege, safety, glory, blessedness, this is the way we must take for its accomplishment. Abound in actings of faith, and we shall thrive in holiness. And they are but acts of presumption under the name of faith, which do not infallibly produce this effect.

2. *Love* hath the same *tendency* and *efficacy*. I mean the love of God. He that would be like unto God must be sure to love him, or all other endeavours to that purpose will be in vain. And he that loves God sincerely, will be like him. Under the Old Testament none in his general course so like unto God as David, called, therefore, 'the man after God's own heart;' and none ever made greater expressions of love unto him, which occur continually in the Psalms. And let men take what pains they can in acts and duties of obedience, if they proceed not from a principle of divine love, their likeness unto God will not be increased by them. All love in general hath an assimilating efficacy, it casts the mind into the mould of the thing beloved. So love of this world makes men earthly minded; their minds and affections grow earthly, carnal, and sensual. But of all kinds divine love is most effectual to this purpose, as having the best, the most noble, proper, and attractive object. It is our adherence unto God with delight, for what he is in himself, as manifested in Jesus Christ. By it we cleave unto God, and so keep near him, and thereby derive transforming virtue from

him. Every approach unto God by ardent love and delight is transfiguring. And it acts itself continually by, (1.) *Contemplation;* (2.) *Admiration;* and, (3.) *Delight* in obedience.

(1.) *Love* acts itself by *contemplation.* It is in the nature of it to be meditating and contemplating on the excellencies of God in Christ. Yea, this is the life of it, and where this is not, there is no love. A heart filled with the love of God, will night and day be exercising itself in and with thoughts of God's glorious excellencies, rejoicing in them. This the psalmist exhorts us unto, Psal. xxx. 4. 'Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.' And love will do the same with respect unto all his other properties. See to this purpose, Psal. lxiii. throughout. And this will further our likeness unto him; our minds by it will be changed into the image of what we contemplate, and we shall endeavour that our lives be conformed thereunto.

(2.) It works by *admiration* also. This is the voice of love; 'How great is his goodness! how great is his beauty!' Zech. ix. 17. the soul being, as it were, ravished with that view which it hath of the glorious excellencies of God in Christ, hath no way to express its affections but by admiration. How great is his goodness! how great is his beauty! And this beauty of God is that sweetness and holy symmetry of glory (if I may be allowed to speak so improperly) in all the perfections of God, being all in a sweet correspondency exalted in Christ, which is the proper object of our love. To see infinite holiness, purity, and righteousness, with infinite love, goodness, grace, and mercy, all equally glorified in and towards the same things and persons, one glimpse whereof is not to be attained in the world out of Christ; is that beauty of God which attracts the love of a believing soul, and fills it with a holy admiration of him. And this also is a most effectual furtherance of our conformity unto him, which without these steps we shall labour in vain after.

(3.) Again, love gives *delight* in obedience, and all the duties of it. The common instance of Jacob is known, of whom it is said, that his seven years' service seemed short, and so easy to him, for the love he bare to Rachel. He did that with delight, which he would not afterward undergo for the greatest wages. But we have a greater instance; our

Lord Jesus Christ says concerning all the obedience that was required of him; 'Thy law, O God, is in my heart; I delight to do thy will.' And yet we know how terrible to nature were the things he did and suffered in obedience to that law. But his unspeakable love to God and the souls of men, rendered it all his delight. Hence follows intension and frequency in all the duties of it. And where these two are, intension of mind and spirit, with a frequency of holy duties, both proceeding from delight, there holiness will thrive, and consequently we shall do so in our conformity to God. In brief, love and likeness unto God are inseparable, and proportionate unto one another. And without this, no duties of obedience are any part of his image.

Secondly, There are graces which are *declarative* of this assimilation, or which *evidence* and manifest our *likeness* unto God. I shall instance only in two of them.

1. And the first is such, as I shall give many *names* unto it in its description, as the Scripture doth also, but the thing intended is one and the same. This is *goodness, kindness, benignity, love,* with readiness to do *good,* to *forgive,* to *help,* and *relieve,* and this towards *all* men, on *all* occasions. And this also is to be considered in opposition unto an evil habit of mind exerting itself in many vices, which yet agree in the same general nature; such are anger, wrath, envy, malice, revenge, frowardness, selfishness: all which are directly opposite to the grace of holiness, at present instanced in and pleaded for. And this I fear, is not so considered as it ought to be: for if it were, it would not be so common a thing as, it may be, it is, for men to plead highly for the imitation of God, and almost in all they do give us a full representation of the devil. For as this universal benignity and love to all, is the greatest representation of the nature of God on the earth; so is fierceness, envy, wrath, and revenge, of that of the devil. Would we then be like unto our heavenly Father, would we manifest that we are so unto his glory, would we represent him in and unto the world, it must be by this frame of spirit, and actings constantly suited thereunto. This our blessed Saviour instructs us in and unto; Matt. v. 44, 45. A man, I say, thus good, his nature being cured and rectified by grace, thence useful and helpful, free from guile, envy and selfishness, pride and ela-

tion of mind, is the best representation we can have of God on the earth, since the human nature of Christ was removed from us.

This, therefore, we are to labour after, if we intend to be like God, or to manifest his glory in our persons and lives unto the world. And no small part of our holiness consists herein. Many lusts, corruptions, and distempered passions, are to be subdued by grace, if we design to be eminent. Strong bents and inclinations of mind to comply with innumerable provocations and exasperations that will befall us, must be corrected and discarded. Many duties be constantly attended unto, and sundry graces kept up to their exercise. The whole drove of temptations, all whose force consists in a pretence of care for self, must be scattered or resisted. And hence it is, that in the Scripture a good man, a merciful man, a useful, liberal man, is frequently spoken of by way of eminency and distinction, as one whom God hath an especial regard unto, and concerning whom there are peculiar promises. When men live to themselves, and are satisfied that they do no hurt, though they do no good; are secure, selfish, wrathful, angry, peevish, or have their kindness confined to their relations, or otherwise are little useful but in what they are pressed unto, and therein come off with difficulty in their own minds, who esteem all lost that is done for the relief of others, and the greatest part of wisdom to be cautious, and disbelieve the necessities of men; in a word, that make self and its concernments the end of their lives; whatever otherwise their profession be, or their diligence in religious duties, they do very little either represent or glorify God in the world. If we, therefore, design to be holy, let us constantly, in our families, towards our relations, in churches, in our conversations in the world, and dealings with all men, towards our enemies and persecutors, the worst of them, so far as they are ours only, towards all mankind as we have opportunity, labour after conformity unto God, and to express our likeness unto him, in this philanthropy, goodness, benignity, condescension, readiness to forgive, to help and relieve, without which we neither are, nor can be, the children of our Father which is in heaven.

Especially is this frame of heart, and actings suitable thereunto, required of us with respect unto the saints of

God, unto believers. Even God himself, whom we are bound to imitate, and a conformity unto whom we are pressing after, doth exercise his benignity and kindness in a peculiar manner towards them; 1 Tim. iv. 10. 'He is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe.' There is a specialty in the exercise of his saving goodness towards believers. And in answer hereunto, we are likewise commanded 'to do good unto all men, but especially unto them who are of the household of faith;' Gal. vi. 10. Although we are obliged to the exercise of the goodness before described, unto all men whatever, as we have an opportunity; so we are allowed, yea, we are enjoined a peculiar regard herein unto the household of faith. And if this were more in exercise, if we esteemed ourselves (notwithstanding the provocations and exasperations which we meet withal, or suppose we do so, when perhaps none are given us, or intended us) obliged to express this benignity, kindness, goodness, forbearness, and love towards all believers in an especial manner; it would prevent or remove many of those scandalous offences and animosities that are among us. If in common we do love them that love us, and do good to them that do good to us, and delight in them who are of our company and go the same way with us, it may advance us into the condition of pharisees and publicans, for they did so also. But if among believers, we will take this course, love them only, delight in them only, be open and free in all effects of genuine kindness, towards them who go our way, or are of our party, or are kind and friendly to us, or that never gave us provocations really, nor in our own surmises; we are so far, and therein worse than either pharisees or publicans. We are to endeavour conformity and likeness unto God, not only as he is the God of nature, and is good unto all the works of his hands; but as he is our heavenly Father, and is good, kind, benign, merciful, in an especial manner, unto the whole family of his children, however differenced among themselves, or indeed unkind or provoking unto him. I confess, when I see men apt to retain a sense of old provocations and differences, ready to receive impressions of new ones, or ready for apprehensions of such, where there are none; incredulous of the sincerity of others who profess a readiness for love and peace, to take

things in the worst sense, to be morose and severe towards this or that sort of believers, unready to help them, scarce desiring their prosperity, or, it may be, their safety; I cannot but look upon it as a very great stain to their profession whatever else it be. And by this rule would I have my own ways examined.

2. *Truth* is another grace, another part of holiness, of the same import and nature. Truth is used in the Scripture for uprightness and integrity; 'Thou requirest truth in the inward parts;' Psal. li. 6. and frequently the doctrine of truth, as of God revealed, and by us believed. But that which I intend is only what is enjoined us by the apostle, namely, in all things to 'speak the truth in love;' Eph. iv. 15. Our apostacy from God was eminently from him as the God of truth, by an opposition to which attribute we sought to dethrone him from his glory; we would not believe that his word was truth. And sin entered into the world by and with a long train of lies: and ever since the whole world and every thing in it is filled with them, which represents him and his nature who is the father of lies and liars. Hereby doth it visibly and openly continue in its apostacy from the God of truth. I could willingly stay to manifest how the whole world is corrupted, depraved, and sullied by lies of all sorts, but I must not divert thereunto. Wherefore, truth and sincerity in words, for that at present I must confine myself unto, is an effect of renovation of the image of God in us, and a representation of him to the world. No duty is more frequently pressed upon us; 'Put away false speaking,' 'lie not one to another,' 'speak the truth in love;' and the consideration hereof is exceeding necessary unto all those who by their course of life are engaged in trading, and that both because of the disreputation which by the evil practices of some, of many, that I say not of the most, is cast upon that course of life, and also because failures in truth are apt a thousand ways to insinuate themselves into the practices of such persons, yea, when they are not aware thereof. 'It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, but when he goeth away he boasteth;' and it is good, it is good, saith the seller, but when he hath sold it he boasteth, or is well pleased with the advantage which he hath made by his words; but these things have the image

of Satan upon them, and are most opposite to the God of truth. Another occasion must be taken farther to press this necessary duty, only at present I do but intimate that where truth is not universally observed, according to the utmost watchfulness of sincerity and love, there all other marks and tokens of the image of God in any persons are not only sullied but defaced, and the representation of Satan is most prevalent. And these things I could not but add, as naturally consequential unto that first principal argument for the necessity of holiness, which we have proposed and insisted on.

Having dispatched this first argument, and added unto it some especial improvements with respect unto its influence into our practice, it remains only that we free it from one objection which it seems exposed unto. Now this ariseth from the consideration of the infinite grace, mercy, and love of God, as they are proposed in the dispensation of the word: for it may be said unto us, and like enough it will, considering the frame of men's minds in the days wherein we live, do not you yourselves who thus press unto holiness, and the necessity of it, from the consideration of the nature of God, preach unto us every day the greatness of his mercy towards all sorts of sinners, his readiness to receive them, his willingness to pardon them, and that freely in Christ, without the consideration of any worth, merit, or righteousness of their own? And do you not herein invite all sorts of sinners, the worst and the greatest, to come unto him by Christ, that they may be pardoned and accepted? Whence then can arise any argument for the necessity of holiness, from the consideration of the nature of this God, whose inestimable treasures of grace, and the freedom of whose love and mercy towards sinners, no tongue, as you say, can express.

Ans. 1. This objection is very natural unto carnal and unbelieving minds, and therefore we shall meet with it at every turn. There is nothing seems more reasonable unto them, than that we may live in sin because grace hath abounded. If men must yet be holy, they can see no need nor use of grace; and they cannot see that God is gracious to any purpose, if, notwithstanding, men may perish because they are not holy. But this objection is raised, rejected, and

condemned by our apostle, in whose judgment we may acquiesce; Rom. vi. 1. and in the same place he subjoins the reasons, why, notwithstanding the superabounding grace of God in Christ, there is an indispensable necessity that all believers should be holy.

2. God himself hath obviated this objection. He proclaims his name, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. 'The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgressions, and sin.' Had he stood here, and neither in this nor in any other place of Scripture, farther declared his nature and unchangeable purposes concerning sinners, some colour might have been laid on this objection. But he adds immediately, 'and that will by no means clear the guilty;' that is, as it is explained in places of Scripture innumerable, such as go on in their sins, without regard unto obedience and holiness, springing from the atonement made for their guilty souls in the blood of Christ.

3. We do, we ought to declare, the rich and free love, grace, mercy, and bounty of God unto sinners, in and by Jesus Christ; and woe unto us, if we should not be found in that work all our days, and thereby encourage all sorts of sinners to come unto him for the free pardon of their sins, 'without money or price,' without merit or desert on their part; for this is the gospel. But, notwithstanding all this grace and condescension, we declare, that he doth not dethrone himself, nor deny himself, nor change his nature, nor become unholy, that we may be saved. He is God still, naturally and essentially holy; holy as he is in Christ, reconciling the sinful world unto himself, and therefore indispensably requires, that those whom he pardons, receives, accepts into his love and communion with himself, should be holy also. And these things are not only consistent but inseparable. Without the consideration of this grace in God, we can have no encouragement to be holy; and without the necessity of holiness in us, that grace can neither be glorified nor useful.

ETERNAL ELECTION

A

CAUSE OF AND MOTIVE UNTO HOLINESS.

CHAP. II.

Other arguments for the necessity of holiness, from God's eternal election. The argument from thence explained, improved, vindicated.

We have seen, upon the whole matter, what conclusions (as unto our own duty) we ought to draw from that revelation of the nature of God in Christ, which is made unto us, and our relation unto him: if we are not thereby prevailed on, always, in all instances of obedience, to endeavour to be holy, universally, in all manner of holy conversation, we neither can enjoy his favour here, nor be brought unto the enjoyment of him in glory hereafter.

That consideration which usually we take of God, next after his *nature* and the properties of it, is of the *eternal free acts* of his *will*, or his *decrees* and *purposes*. And we shall now inquire, what respect they have unto *holiness* in us, what *arguments* and *motives* may be taken from them, to evince the *necessity* of it unto us, and to press us thereunto; especially from the decree of *election*, which in an especial manner is by some traduced, as no friend to this design. I say then, that,

It is the eternal and immutable purpose of God, that all who are his in a peculiar manner, all whom he designs to bring unto blessedness in the everlasting enjoyment of himself; shall antecedently thereunto be made holy. This purpose of his, God hath declared unto us, that we may take no wrong measures of our estate and condition, nor build hopes or expectations of future glory, on sandy foundations that will fail us. Whatever we are else, in parts, abilities, profession, moral honesty, usefulness unto others, reputation in the church, if we are not personally, spiritually, evangelically holy, we have no interest in that purpose or decree of God, whereby any per-

sons are designed unto salvation and glory. And this we shall briefly confirm.

Eph. i. 4. 'He hath chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and unblamable before him in love.' But is this that which firstly and principally we are ordained unto, and that for its own sake, namely, holiness, and unblamableness in the obedience of love? No; we are firstly ordained unto 'eternal life;' Acts xiii. 48. we are 'chosen from the beginning unto salvation;' 2 Thess. ii. 13. That which God, in the first place, intends as his end in the decree of election, is our eternal salvation, to the 'praise of the glory of his grace;' Eph. i. 5, 6. 11. How then is he said to choose us that we should be holy? in what sense is our holiness proposed as the design of God in election? It is as the indispensable means for the attaining of the end of salvation and glory. I do, saith God, choose these poor lost sinners, to be mine in an especial manner, to save them by my Son, and bring them, through his mediation, unto eternal glory; but in order hereunto, I do purpose and decree, that they shall be holy and unblamable in the obedience of love, without which, as a means, none shall ever attain that end. Wherefore, the expectation and hope of any man, for life and immortality and glory, without previous holiness, can be built on no other foundation but this, that God will rescind his eternal decrees, and change his purposes, that is, cease to be God, merely to comply with them in their sins. And who knows not what will be the end of such a cursed hope and expectation? The contrary is seconded by that of the apostle, Rom. viii. 36. 'Whom he did predestinate, them he also called.' Wherever predestination unto glory goes before, concerning any person, there effectual vocation unto faith and holiness infallibly ensues: and where these never were, the other never was. So 2 Thess. ii. 13. God hath 'chosen you from the beginning unto salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit.' Chosen we are unto salvation, by the free sovereign grace of God: but how may this salvation be actually obtained? how may we be brought into the actual possession of it? Through the sanctification of the Spirit, and no otherwise. Whom God doth not sanctify and make holy by his Spirit, he never chose unto salvation from the beginning. The counsels of God, therefore, concerning

us, do not depend on our holiness; but upon our holiness our future happiness depends in the counsels of God.

Hence we may see, wherein lies the force of the argument for the necessity of holiness, from God's decree of election; and it consists in these two things:

First, That such is the *nature* of the *unalterable decree* of God in this matter, that no person living, can ever attain the end of *glory* and *happiness*, without the means of *grace* and *holiness*. The same eternal purpose respecteth both. I shall afterward shew, how the infallible and indissolvable connexion of these things is established by the law of God. Our present argument is from hence, that it is fixed by God's eternal decree. He hath ordained none to salvation, but he hath ordained them antecedently to be holy. Not the least infant that goes out of this world, shall come to eternal rest, unless it be sanctified, and so made habitually and radically holy. He chooseth none to salvation but through the sanctification of the Spirit. As, therefore, whatever else we have or may seem to have, it is contrary to the nature of God, that we should come to the enjoyment of him, if we are not holy, so it is contrary to his eternal and unchangeable decree also.

Secondly, It ariseth from hence, that we can have no *evidence* of our *interest* in God's decree of *election*, whereby we are designed unto life and glory, without *holiness* effectually wrought in us. Wherefore, as our life depends upon it, so do all our comforts. To this purpose speaks our apostle, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his.' It is the decree of election which he intends, and he proposeth it as that alone which will give security against apostacy in a time of great temptations and trials; as our Saviour doth likewise; Matt. xxiv. 24. Every thing else will fail, but what is an especial fruit and effect of this decree. What, therefore, is incumbent on us with respect thereunto, that we may know we have an interest in this single security against final apostacy? saith the apostle, 'And let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from inquity.' There is no other way to come unto an evidence thereof, but by a departure from all iniquity, by universal holiness. So the apostle Peter directs us, to 'give all diligence to make our election sure;'

2 Pet. i. 10. Sure it is in itself, from all eternity. 'The foundation of God standeth sure.' But our duty it is to make it sure and certain unto ourselves. And this is a thing of the highest importance and concernment unto us, whence we are required to give all diligence unto that end. How then may this be done or effected? This he declares in the foregoing verses, and it is only by finding in ourselves, and duly exercising that train of gospel graces and duties which he there enumerates; ver. 5—9.

It is evident, therefore, and necessary from God's decree of election, that if we intend either eternal glory hereafter, or any consolation or assurance here, that we must endeavour to be 'holy and unblamable before him in love.' For whomsoever God purposeth to save, he purposeth first to sanctify; neither have we any ground to suppose, that we are built on that foundation of God which standeth sure, unless we depart from all iniquity. What farther motives may be taken from the especial nature of this decree, shall be considered when we have removed one objection out of our way.

Some there are, who apprehend that these things are quite otherwise. For they say, that a supposition of God's decree of personal election is a discouragement unto all endeavours for holiness, and an effectual obstruction thereof in the lives of men. And under this pretence chiefly, is the doctrine concerning it blasphemed and evil spoken of. 'For,' say they, 'if God have freely from eternity chosen men unto salvation, what need is there that they should be holy? They may live securely in the pursuit of their lusts, and be sure not to fail of heaven at the last. For God's decree cannot be frustrated, nor his will resisted. And if men be not elected, whatever they endeavour in the ways of holy obedience, it will be utterly lost, for eternally saved they cannot, they shall not be. This, therefore, is so far from being a conviction of the necessity of holiness, and a motive unto it, as that indeed it renders it unnecessary and useless; yea, defeats the power and efficacy of all other arguments for it, and motives unto it.'

Now this objection, if not for the sake of those who make use of it as a cavil against the truth, yet of those who may feel the force of it in the way of a temptation, must be removed out of our way: to this end, I answer two things:

1. In *general;* that this *persuasion is not of him that calleth us.* This way of arguing is not taught in the Scripture, nor can thence be learned. The doctrine of God's free electing love and grace is fully declared therein. And withal, it is proposed as the fountain of all holiness, and made a great motive thereunto. Is it not safer now for us to adhere to the plain testimonies of Scripture, confirmed by the experience of the generality of believers, captivating our understandings to the obedience of faith, than hearken unto such perverse cavils, as would possess our minds with a dislike of God and his ways? Those who hate gospel holiness, or would substitute something else in the room of it, will never want exceptions against all its concernments. A holiness they lay claim unto, and plead an interest in. For, as I said formerly, a confession in general of the necessity hereof, is almost the only thing wherein all that are called Christians do agree. But such a holiness they would have, as doth not spring from eternal divine election, as is not wrought in us originally by the almighty efficacy of grace in our conversion, as is not promoted by free justification, through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. Now, this is such a holiness as the Scripture knoweth nothing of, unless it be to reject and condemn it. Wherefore, this objection proceeding only from the craft of Satan, opposing the ways and methods of God's grace, when he dareth not openly oppose the thing itself, it is safer for a believer to rest quietly in the clear Scripture revelation, than to attend unto such proud, perverse, and froward cavillings.

2. In *particular;* we are not only obliged to believe all *divine revelations,* but also in the *way, order,* and *method,* wherein, by the *will* of God, they are proposed unto us, and which is required by the *nature* of the things themselves. For instance, the belief of eternal life is required in the gospel: but yet no man is obliged to believe, that he shall be eternally saved whilst he lives in his sins, but rather the contrary. On this supposition, which is plain and evident, I shall, in the ensuing propositions, utterly cast this objection out of consideration.

(1.) The decree of *election,* considered *absolutely* in itself, without respect unto its *effects,* is no part of God's *revealed will;* that is, it is not revealed, that this or that man, is,

or is not elected. This, therefore, can be made neither argument nor objection, about any thing wherein faith or obedience are concerned; for we know it not, we cannot know it, it is not our duty to know it, the knowledge of it is not proposed as of any use unto us, yea, it is our sin to inquire into it. It may seem to some, to be like the tree of knowledge of good and evil unto Eve; good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and much to be desired to make one wise, as all secret forbidden things seem to carnal minds. But men can gather no fruit from it but death. See Deut. xxix. 29. Whatever exceptions, therefore, are laid against this decree as it is in itself, whatever inferences are made, on supposition of this or that man's being, or not being, elected, they are all unjust and unreasonable, yea, proved contending with God, who hath appointed another way for the discovery hereof, as we shall see afterward.

(2.) God sends the *gospel* to men in pursuit of his *decree of election,* and in order unto its effectual accomplishment. I dispute not what other end it hath or may have, in its indefinite proposal unto all. But this is the first, regulating, principal end of it. Wherefore, in the preaching of it, our apostle affirms, that he 'endured all things for the elect's sake, that they might obtain the salvation which is in Jesus Christ, with eternal glory;' 2 Tim. ii. 10. So God beforehand commanded him to stay and preach the gospel at Corinth, because 'he had much people in that city;' namely, in his purpose of grace; Acts xviii. 10. See chap. ii. 47. xiii. 48.

(3.) Wherever this *gospel comes,* it proposeth *life* and *salvation* by *Jesus Christ,* unto all that shall *believe, repent,* and yield *obedience* unto him. It plainly makes known unto men their duty, and plainly proposeth unto them their reward. In this state of things, no man without the highest pride, and utmost effect of unbelief, can oppose the secret decree of God unto our known duty. Saith such an one, I will neither repent, nor believe, nor obey, unless I may first know whether I am elected or no, for all at last will depend thereon. If this be the resolution of any man, he may go about his other occasions, the gospel hath nothing to say or offer unto him. If he will admit of it on no other terms, but that he may set up his own will, and wisdom, and methods, in

opposition unto and exclusion of those of God, he must, for aught I know, take his own course, whereof he may repent when it is too late.

(4.) The *sole way* of God's appointment, whereby we may come to an apprehension of an interest in *election*, is by the *fruits* of it in our *own souls:* nor is it lawful for us to inquire into it or after it any other way. The obligation which the gospel puts upon us to believe any thing, respects the order of the things themselves to be believed, and the order of our obedience, as was before observed. For instance; when it is declared, that Christ died for sinners, no man is immediately obliged to believe, that Christ died for him in particular, but only that he died to save sinners, to procure a way of salvation for them, among whom he finds himself to be. Hereon the gospel requires of men faith and obedience: this are they obliged to comply withal. Until this be done, no man is under an obligation to believe that Christ died for him in particular. So is it in this matter of election: a man is obliged to believe the doctrine of it, upon the first promulgation of the gospel, because it is therein plainly declared. But as for his own personal election, he cannot believe it, nor is obliged to believe it any otherwise, but as God reveals it by its effects. No man ought, no man can justly question his own election, doubt of it, or disbelieve it, until he be in such a condition as wherein it is impossible that the effects of election should ever be wrought in him; if such a condition there be in this world. For as a man whilst he is unholy can have no evidence that he is elected, so he can have none that he is not elected, whilst it is possible that ever he may be holy. Wherefore, whether men are elected or no, is not that which God calls any immediately to be conversant about. Faith, obedience, holiness, are the inseparable fruits, effects, and consequents of election; as hath been proved before. See Eph. i. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 13. Tit. i. 1. Acts xiii. 48. In whomsoever these things are wrought, he is obliged, according to the method of God and the gospel, to believe his own election: and any believer may have the same assurance of it as he hath of his calling, sanctification, or justification; for these things are inseparable. And by the exercise of grace, are we obliged to secure our interest in election; 2 Pet. i. 11. But as for those who are

as yet unbelievers and unholy, they can draw no conclusion that they are not elected, but from this supposition, that they are in a state and condition, wherein it is impossible that ever they should have either grace or holiness; which cannot be supposed concerning any man but he that knows himself to have sinned against the Holy Ghost.

Wherefore, all the supposed strength of the objection mentioned, lieth only in the pride of men's minds and wills, refusing to submit themselves unto the order and method of God in the dispensation of his grace, and his prescription of their duty, where we must leave it.

To return unto our designed discourse. The doctrine of God's *eternal election* is every where in the Scripture proposed for the *encouragement* and *consolation* of believers, and to further them in their course of *obedience* and *holiness*. See Eph. i. 3—10. Rom. viii. 28—33. As unto men's present concernment therein, it is infallibly assured unto them by its *effects;* and being so, it is filled with *motives* unto holiness, as we shall now farther declare in particular.

First, The *sovereign* and ever-to-be-adored *grace* and *love* of God herein, is a powerful *motive* hereunto. For we have no way to express our resentment of this grace, our acknowledgment of it, our thankfulness for it, but by a holy fruitful course of obedience; nor doth God on the account hereof require any thing else of us. Let us, therefore, inquire what sense and obligation this puts upon us; that God from all eternity, out of his mere sovereign grace, not moved by any thing in ourselves, should first choose us unto life and salvation by Jesus Christ, decreeing immutably to save us out of the perishing multitude of mankind, from whom we neither then did in his eye or consideration, nor by any thing in ourselves ever would differ in the least? What impression doth this make upon our souls? What conclusion as to our practice and obedience do we hence educe? Why saith one, 'If God hath thus chosen me, I may then live in sin as I please, all will be well and safe in the latter end, which is all I need care for.' But this is the language of a devil, and not of a man. Suggestions possibly of this nature, by the craft of Satan, in conjunction with the deceitfulness of sin, may be injected into the minds of believers; as what may not so be? But he that shall foment, embrace, and act practically

according to this inference, is such a monster of impiety and presumptuous ingratitude, as hell itself cannot parallel, in many instances. I shall use some boldness in this matter. He that doth not understand, who is not sensible, that an apprehension by faith of God's electing love in Christ, hath a natural, immediate, powerful influence upon the souls of believers, unto the love of God and holy obedience, is utterly unacquainted with the nature of faith, and its whole work and actings towards God, in the hearts of them that believe. Is it possible, that any one who knows these things, can suppose, that those on whom they are in sincerity and power, can be such stupid, impious, and ungrateful monsters, so devoid of all holy ingenuity, and filial affections towards God, as merely out of despite unto him, to cast poison into the spring of all their own mercies? Many have I known complain, that they could not arrive at a comfortable persuasion of their own election; never any, who when they had received it in a due way and manner, that it proved a snare unto them, that it tended to ingenerate looseness of life, unholiness, or a contempt of God in them. Besides, in the Scripture it is still proposed and made use of unto other ends. And those who know any thing of the nature of faith, or of the love of God, any thing of intercourse or communion with him by Jesus Christ, any thing of thankfulness, obedience, or holiness, will not be easily persuaded, but that God's electing love and grace, is a mighty constraining motive unto the due exercise of them all.

God himself knoweth this to be so, and, therefore, he maketh the consideration of his electing love, as free and undeserved, his principal argument to stir up the people unto holy obedience; Deut. vii. 6—8. 11. And a supposition hereof lies at the bottom of that blessed exhortation of our apostle; Col. iii. 12. 'Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, forgiving one another.' These things, which are so great a part of our holiness, become the elect of God; these are required of them on the account of their interest in electing love and grace. Men may frame a holiness to themselves, and be stirred up unto it by motives of their own (as there is a religion in the world, that runs in a parallel line by that of

evangelical truth, but toucheth it not, nor will do so to eternity), but that which the gospel requires, is promoted on the grounds and by the motives that are peculiar unto it, whereof this of God's free electing love and grace is among the principal. Farther to confirm this truth, I shall instance in some especial *graces, duties,* and *parts* of holiness, that this consideration is suited to promote.

1. *Humility* in all things, is a necessary consequent of a due *consideration* of this *decree* of God. For what were we when he thus set his heart upon us, to choose us, and to do us good for ever? Poor, lost, undone creatures, that lay perishing under the guilt of our apostacy from him? What did he see in us, to move him so to choose us, nothing but sin and misery? What did he foresee that we would do of ourselves more than others, if he wrought not in us by his effectual grace? nothing but a continuance in sin and rebellion against him, and that for ever. How should the thoughts hereof keep our souls in all humility and continual self-abasement. For what have we in or from ourselves, on the account whereof we should be lifted up? Wherefore, as the elect of God, let us put on humility in all things. And let me add, that there is no grace whereby at this day we may more glorify God and the gospel, now the world is sinking into ruin under the weight of its own pride.

The spirits of men, the looks of men, the tongues of men, the lives of men, are lifted up by their pride unto their destruction. The good Lord keep professors from a share in the pride of these days. Spiritual pride in foolish self-exalting opinions, and the pride of life in the fashions of the world, are the poison of this age.

2. *Submission* to the *sovereign will* and *pleasure* of God, in the disposal of all our *concerns* in this world: that this is an excellent *fruit* of *faith,* an eminent part of *holiness,* or duty of *obedience,* is acknowledged; and never was it more signally called for than it is at this day. He that cannot live in an actual resignation of himself and all his concerns unto the sovereign pleasure of God, can neither glorify him in any thing, nor have one hour's solid peace in his own mind. This public calamities, this private dangers and losses, this the uncertainty of all things here below, call for at present in an especial manner. God hath taken all pre-

tences of security from the earth, by what some men feel and some men fear. None knows how soon it may be his portion to be brought unto the utmost extremity of earthly calamities. There is none so old, none so young, none so wise, none so rich, as thence to expect relief from such things? Where then shall we in this condition cast anchor? whither shall we betake ourselves for quietness and repose? It is no way to be obtained, but in a resignation of ourselves and all our concernments into the sovereign pleasure of God: and what greater motive can we have thereunto than this? The first act of divine sovereign pleasure concerning us, was the choosing of us from all eternity unto all holiness and happiness. This was done when we were not, when we had no contrivances of our own. And shall we not now put all our temporary concerns into the same hand? Can the same fountain send out sweet and bitter water? Can the same sovereign pleasure of God be the free only cause of all our blessedness, and can it do that which is really evil unto us? Our souls, our persons, were secure and blessedly provided for, as to grace and glory, in the sovereign will of God; and what a prodigious impiety is it not to trust all other things in the same hand, to be disposed of freely and absolutely? If we will not forego our interest in mere absolute free sovereign grace for ten thousand worlds, as no believer will, how ready should we be to resign up thereunto that little portion which we have in this world among perishing things?

3. *Love, kindness, compassion,* forbearance towards all *believers,* all the *saints* of God, however differenced among themselves, are made indispensably *necessary* unto us, and pressed on us from the same consideration. And herein also doth no small part of our holiness consist. To this purpose is the exhortation of the apostle before mentioned, Col. iii. 12. For, if God have chosen them all from eternity, and made them the objects of his love and grace, as he hath done so concerning all sincere believers, do we not think it necessary, doth not God require of us, that we should love them also? How dare any of us entertain unkind severe thoughts? how dare we maintain animosities and enmities against any of them whom God hath eternally chosen to grace and glory? Such things, it may be, upon provoca-

tions and surprisals, and clashings of secular interests, have fallen out, and will fall out amongst us; but they are all opposite and contrary unto that influence which the consideration of God's electing love ought to have upon us. The apostle's rule is, that, as unto our communion in love, we ought to receive him whom God hath received, and because God hath received him, against which no other thing can be laid in bar; Rom. xiv. 1. 3. And the rule is no less certain, yea, is subject to less exceptions, that we ought to choose, embrace, and love all those, whoever they be, whom God hath chosen and loved from eternity. There is no greater evidence of low, weak, selfish Christians, than to prescribe any other rules or bounds unto their spiritual evangelical affections, than the decree of God's election, as manifesting itself in its effects. 'I endure all things,' saith our apostle, not for the Jews or Gentiles, not for the weak or strong in the faith, not for those of this or that way, but 'for the elect's sake.' This should regulate our love, and mightily stir it up unto all actings of kindness, mercy, compassion, forbearance, and forgiveness.

4. *Contempt of the world,* and all that belongs unto it, will hence also be ingenerated in us. Did God set his heart upon some from eternity? did he choose them to be his own peculiar, to distinguish them as his from all the residue of mankind? doth he design to give them the highest, greatest, best fruits and effects of his love, and glorify himself in their praises for ever? What then will he do for them? will he make them all kings or emperors in the world? Or at least, will he have them to be rich, and noble, and honourable among men, that it may be known and proclaimed, 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king of heaven delighteth to honour;' however, that they should be kept from straits, and difficulties, and trials, from poverty, and shame, and reproach in the world? alas! none of these things were in the least in the heart of God concerning them. They deserve not to be named on the same day, as we use to speak, with the least of those things which God hath chosen his unto. Were there any real substantial good in them on their own account, he would not have cast them out of the counsels of his love. But on the contrary, 'you see your calling, brethren,' which is the

infallible fruit and consequent of election, 'how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble, not many mighty are called, but God hath chosen the poor of the world, the base and the contemptible,' for the most part. Yea, he hath designed the generality of his elect, to a poor, low, and afflicted condition in this world. And shall we set our hearts on those things that God hath so manifestly put an under valuation upon, in comparison of the least concernment of grace and holiness? Wherefore, let them that are poor and despised in the world, learn to be satisfied with their state and condition: had God seen it to have been good for you to have been otherwise, he would not have passed it by when he was acting eternal love towards you. And let them that are rich not set their hearts upon uncertain riches. Alas! they are things which God had no regard unto, when he prepared grace and glory for his own. Let the remembrance hereof suit your esteem and valuation of them; do but think with yourselves that these are not the things that God had any regard unto, when he chose us unto grace and glory, and it will abate of your cares about them, cool your love towards them, and take off your hearts from them, which is your holiness.

Secondly, *Electing love* is a *motive* and *encouragement* unto holiness, because of the *enabling supplies of grace* which he may and ought thence to expect by Jesus Christ. The difficulties we meet withal in a course of holiness are great and many. Here Satan, the world, and sin, do put forth and try their utmost strength; oft-times the best are foiled, oft-times discouraged, sometimes weary and ready to give over: it requires a good spiritual courage, to take a prospect of the lions, serpents, and snares, that lie in the way of a constant persevering course in gospel obedience. Hereon our knees are ready to grow feeble, and our hands to hang down. It is no small relief herein, no small encouragement to continue in our progress, that the fountain of electing grace, will never fail us, but continually give out supplies of spiritual strength and refreshment. Hence may we take heart and courage, to rise again when we have been foiled, to abide when the shock of temptation is violent, and to persevere in those duties which are most wearisome to the flesh. And they are unacquainted with a course of holy obedience, who

know not how needful this consideration is unto a comfortable continuance therein.

Thirdly, It hath the same *tendency* and effect in the *assurance* we have from thence, that notwithstanding all the oppositions we meet withal, we shall not utterly and finally miscarry. God's election will at last obtain; Rom. xi. 7. and 'his foundation standeth sure;' 2 Tim. i. 19. His purpose, which is 'according unto election,' is unchangeable; and therefore the final perseverance and salvation of those concerned in it, are everlastingly secured. This is the design of the apostle's discourse, Rom. viii. from ver. 28. unto the end. Because of the immutability of God's eternal purpose in our predestination, and his effectual operations in the pursuit and for the execution thereof, the elect of God shall infallibly be carried through all, even the most dreadful oppositions that are made against them, and be at length safely landed in glory. And there is no greater encouragement to grow and persist in holiness, than what is administered by this assurance of a blessed end and issue of it.

Those who have had experience of that spiritual slumber and sloth which unbelief will cast us under, of those weaknesses, discouragements, and despondencies, which uncertainties, doubts, fears, and perplexities of what will be the issue of things at last with them, do cast upon the souls of men, how duties are discouraged, spiritual endeavours and diligence are impaired, delight in God weakened, and love cooled by them, will be able to make a right judgment of the truth of this assertion. Some think that this apprehension of the immutability of God's purpose of election, and the infallibility of the salvation of believers on that account, tends only to carelessness and security in sin; and that to be always in fear, dread, and uncertainty of the end, is the only means to make us watchful unto duties of holiness. It is very sad, that any man should so far proclaim his inexperience and unacquaintedness with the nature of gospel grace, the genius and inclination of the new creature, and the proper workings of faith, as to be able thus to argue, without a check put upon him by himself and from his own experience. It is true, were there no difference between faith and presumption, no difference between the spirit of liberty under the covenant of grace, and that of bondage under the old

covenant; no spirit of adoption given unto believers, no filial genuine delight in, and adherence unto, God, ingenerated in them thereby, there might be something in this objection: but if the nature of faith, and of the new creature, the operations of the one and disposition of the other, are such as they are declared to be in the gospel, and as believers have experience of them in their own hearts, men do but bewray their ignorance, whilst they contend, that the assurance of God's unchangeable love in Christ, flowing from the immutability of his counsel in election, doth any way impeach, or doth not effectually promote the industry of believers in all duties of obedience.

Suppose a man that is on his journey, knoweth himself to be in his right way, and that passing on therein, he shall certainly and infallibly come to his journey's end, especially if he will a little quicken his speed, as occasion shall require; will you say, that this is enough to make such a man careless and negligent, and that it would be much more to his advantage to be lost and bewildered in uncertain paths and ways, not knowing whither he goes, nor whether he shall ever arriveat his journey's end? Common experience declares the contrary, as also how momentary and useless are those violent fits and gusts of endeavours, which proceed from fear and uncertainty, both in things spiritual and temporal, or civil. Whilst men are under the power of actual impressions from such fears, they will convert to God, yea, that they will *momento turbinis*, and perfect holiness in an instant: but so soon as that impression wears off (as it will do on ever occasion, and upon none at all), such persons are as dead and cold towards God, as the lead or iron, which ran but now in a fiery stream, is when the heat is departed from it. It is that soul alone, ordinarily, which hath a comfortable assurance of God's eternal, immutable, electing love, and thence of the blessed end of its own course of obedience, who goeth on constantly and evenly in a course of holiness, quickening his course, and doubling his speed, as he hath occasion from trials or opportunities. And this is the very design of our apostle, to explain and confirm, Heb. vi. from the tenth verse unto the end of the chapter, as is declared elsewhere.

It appears, from what hath been discoursed, that the electing love of God, is a powerful constraining motive unto ho-

liness, and that which proves invincibly, the necessity of it in all who intend the eternal enjoyment of God. But it will be said, 'That if it be supposed or granted, that those who are actually believers, and have a sense of their interest herein, may make the use of it that is pleaded; yet as for those who are unconverted, or are otherwise uncertain of their spiritual state and condition, nothing can be so discouraging unto them as this doctrine of eternal election. Can they make any other conclusion from it, but that, if they are not elected, all care and pains in and about duties of obedience are vain; if they are, they are needless.' The removal of this objection shall put a close unto our discourse on this subject. And I answer:

1. That we have shewed already, that this doctrine is *revealed* and proposed in the Scripture, principally to acquaint believers with their privilege, safety, and fountain of their comforts. Having, therefore, proved its usefulness unto them, I have discharged all that is absolutely needful to my present purpose. But I shall shew moreover, that it hath its proper benefit and advantage towards others also.

For, 2. suppose the doctrine of personal election be preached unto men, together with the other sacred truths of the gospel: two conclusions, it is possible, may by sundry persons be made from it. (1.) That whereas this is a matter of great and eternal moment unto our souls, and there is no way to secure our interest in it, but by the possession of its fruits and effects, which are saving faith and holiness; we will, we must, it is our duty, to use our utmost endeavours, by attaining of them, and growth in them, to make our election sure. And herein, if we be sincere and diligent, we shall not fail. Others, (2.) may conclude, that if it be so indeed, that those who shall be saved are chosen thereunto before the foundation of the world, then it is to no purpose to go about to believe or obey, seeing all things must fall out at last according as they were fore-ordained. Now I ask, which of these conclusions is (I will not say, most suited unto the mind and will of God, with that subjection of soul and conscience which we owe to his sovereign wisdom and authority, but whether of them is) the most rational, and most suitable to the principles of sober love of ourselves, and care of our immortal condition? Nothing is more certain, than

that the latter resolution will be infallibly destructive (if pursued) of all the everlasting concernments of our souls; death and eternal condemnation are the unavoidable issues of it. No man giving himself up to the conduct of that conclusion, shall ever come to the enjoyment of God. But in the other way, it is possible at least, that a man may be found to be the object of God's electing love, and so be saved. But why do I say, it is possible? there is nothing more infallibly certain, than that he who pursues sincerely and diligently the ways of faith and obedience, which are, as we have often said, the fruits of election, shall obtain in the end everlasting blessedness; and, ordinarily, shall have in this world a comfortable evidence of their own personal election. This, therefore, on all accounts, and towards all sorts of persons, is an invincible argument of the necessity of holiness, and a mighty motive thereunto: for it is unavoidable, that if there be such a thing as personal election, and that the fruits of it are sanctification, faith, and obedience; it is utterly impossible, that without holiness any one should see God, the reason of which consequence is apparent unto all.

HOLINESS NECESSARY

FROM

THE COMMANDS OF GOD.

CHAP. III.

Necessity of holiness proved, from the commands of God in the law and the gospel.

We have evinced the *necessity* of *holiness* from the *nature* and the *decrees* of God: our next argument shall be taken from his *word*, or *commands*, as the nature and order of these things do require. And in this case, it is needless to produce instances of God's commands, that we should be holy, it is the concurrent voice of the law and gospel. Our apostle sums up the whole matter, 1 Thess. iv. 1—3. 'We exhort you, that as you have received of us how you ought to walk, and please God, so you would abound more and more; for you know what commandment we gave you, by the Lord Jesus; for this is the will of God, even your sanctification,' or holiness; whereunto he adds one especial instance. This is that which the commandments of Christ require, yea, this is the sum of the whole commanding will of God. The substance of the law is, 'Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy;' Lev. xi. 44. the same with what it is referred unto by our Saviour; Matt. xxii. 37. 39. And, whereas holiness may be reduced unto two heads:

1. The *renovation* of the *image* of God in us; 2. *Universal actual obedience;* they are the sum of the preceptive part of the gospel; Eph. iv. 22—24. Tit. ii. 11, 12. Hereof, therefore, there needeth no farther confirmation by especial testimonies.

Our inquiry must be, what *force* there is in this argument, or whence we do conclude unto a *necessity* of *holiness* from the *command* of God. To this end, the *nature* and proper *adjuncts* of these commands are to be considered; that

is, we are to get our minds and consciences affected with them, so as to endeavour after holiness on their account, or with respect unto them. For whatever we may do, which seems to have the matter of holiness in it, if we do it not with respect unto God's command, it hath not the nature of holiness in it. For our holiness is our conformity and obedience to the will of God; and it is a respect unto a command which makes any thing to be obedience, or gives it the formal nature thereof. Wherefore, as God rejects that from any place in his fear, worship, or service, which is resolved only into the doctrines or precepts of men; Isa. xxix. 13. so for men to pretend unto I know not what freedom, light, and readiness unto all holiness, from a principle within, without respect unto the commands of God without, as given in his word, is to make themselves their own god, and to despise obedience unto him who is over all, God blessed for ever: then are we the servants of God, then are we the disciples of Christ, when we do what is commanded us, and because it is commanded us. And what we are not influenced unto by the authority of God in his commands, we are not principled for by the Spirit of God administered in the promises. Whatever good any man doth in any kind, if the reason why he doth it be not God's command, it belongs neither to holiness nor obedience. Our inquiry, therefore, is after those things in the commands of God, which put such an indispensable obligation upon us unto holiness, as that whatever we may be or we may have without it, will be of no use or advantage unto us, as unto eternal blessedness, or the enjoyment of him.

But to make our way more clear and safe, one thing must yet be premised unto these considerations. And this is, that *God's commands* for *holiness* may be considered two ways: 1. As they belong unto, and are parts of, the *covenant of works;* 2. As they belong and are inseparably annexed unto the *covenant of grace.* In both respects they are materially and formally the same; that is, the same things are required in them, and the same person requires them, and so their obligation is joint and equal. Not only the commands of the new covenant do oblige us unto holiness, but those of the old, also, as to the matter aud substance of them: but there is a great difference in the manner and ends of these commands, as considered so distinctly.

For, 1. the *commands* of God as under the *old covenant*, do so require *universal holiness* of us, in all acts, duties, and degrees of them, that upon the least failure, in substance circumstance, or degree, they allow of nothing else we do, but determine us *transgressors of the whole law*. For with respect unto them, 'whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all;' James ii. 10. Now I acknowledge, that although there ariseth from hence an obligation unto holiness, to them who are under that covenant, and such a necessity of it, as that without it they must certainly perish; yet no argument of the nature with those which I insist upon, can hence be taken to press us unto it. For no arguments are forcible unto this purpose, but such as include encouragements in them unto what they urge. But that, this consideration of the command knoweth nothing of, seeing a compliance with it is in our lapsed condition absolutely impossible; and for the things that are so, we can have no endeavours. And hence it is, that no man influenced only by the commands of the law, or first covenant absolutely considered, whatever in particular he might be forced or compelled unto, did ever sincerely aim or endeavour after universal holiness.

Men may be subdued by the power of the law, and compelled to habituate themselves unto a strict course of duty, and being advantaged therein, by a sedate natural constitution, desire of applause, self-righteousness, or superstition, may make a great appearance of holiness. But if the principle of what they do be only the commands of the law, they never tread one true step in the paths of it.

2. The *end*, why these commands require all the duties of *holiness* of us, is, that they may be our *righteousness before God*, or that we may be *justified* thereby. 'For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things shall live by them,' Rom. x. 5. that is, it requires of us all duties of obedience unto this end, that we may have justification and eternal life by them. But neither on this account can any such argument be taken as those we inquire into. 'For by the deeds of the law no man can be justified: if thou Lord shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand?' Psal. cxxx. 3. So prays David, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no

man living be justified ;' Psal. clxiii. 2. Rom. iii. 20. Gal. ii. 16. And if none can attain the end of the command, as in this sense they cannot, what argument can we take from thence to prevail with them unto obedience? Whoever, therefore, presseth men unto holiness, merely on the commands of the law, and for the ends of it, doth but put them upon tormenting disquietments, and deceive their souls. However men are indispensably obliged hereby, and must eternally perish for want of what the law so requires, who do not, or will not, by faith comply with the only remedy and provision that God hath made in this case. And for this reason we are necessitated to deny a possibility of salvation unto all to whom the gospel is not preached, as well as unto those by whom it is refused. For, they are left unto this law, whose precepts they cannot answer, and whose end they cannot attain.

It is otherwise on both these accounts with the *commands* of God, for holiness under the *new covenant*, or in the gospel. For,

1. Although God in them requireth *universal holiness* of us, yet he doth not do it in that strict and *rigorous* way as by the *law*, so as that if we fail in any thing either as to the *matter* or *manner* of its performance, in the substance of it, or as to the degrees of its perfection, that thereon both that and all we do besides should be rejected. But he doth it with a *contemperation* of *grace and mercy*, so as that if there be a universal *sincerity*, in a respect unto *all* his commands, he both pardoneth many sins, and accepts of what we do, though it come short of *legal perfection;* both on the account of the *mediation* of Christ. Yet this hindereth not, but that the law or command of the gospel doth still require universal holiness of us, and a perfection therein, which we are to do our utmost endeavour to comply withal, though we have a relief provided in sincerity on the one hand, and mercy on the other. For the commands of the gospel do still declare what God approves, and what he doth condemn, which is no less than all holiness on the one hand, and all sin on the other, as exactly and extensively as under the law. For this the very nature of God requireth, and the gospel is not the ministry of sin, so as to give an allowance or indulgence unto the least, although in it pardon be provided for a multitude

of sins by Jesus Christ. The obligation on us unto holiness is equal as unto what it was under the law, though a relief be provided where unavoidably we come short of it. There is, therefore, nothing more certain, than that there is no relaxation given us as unto any duty of holiness, by the gospel, nor any indulgence unto the least sin. But yet upon the supposition of the acceptance of sincerity, and a perfection of parts, instead of degrees, with the mercy provided for our failings and sins ; there is an argument to be taken from the command of it unto an indispensable necessity of holiness, including in it the highest encouragement to endeavour after it. For, together with the command, there is also grace administered, enabling us unto that obedience which God will accept. Nothing, therefore, can avoid or evacuate the power of this command and argument from it, but a stubborn contempt of God, arising from the love of sin.

2. The *commands* of the *gospel* do not require *holiness* and the duties of righteousness of us, to the *same end* as the *commands* of the *law* did, namely, that thereby we might be *justified in the sight of God.* For, whereas God now accepts from us a holiness short of that which the law required, if he did it still for the same end, it would reflect dishonour upon his own righteousness, and the holiness of the gospel.

For, (1.) if God can accept of a righteousness unto justification inferior unto, or short of, what he required by the law, how great severity must it be thought in him, to bind his creatures unto such an exact obedience and righteousness at first, as he could and might have dispensed withal ? If he doth accept of sincere obedience now unto our justification, why did he not do so before, but obliged mankind unto absolute perfection according to the law, for coming short wherein they all perished ? Or shall we say, that God hath changed his mind in this matter, and that he doth not stand so much now on rigid and perfect obedience for our justification, as he did formerly ? Where then is the glory of his immutability, of his essential holiness, of the absolute rectitude of his nature and will ?

Besides, (2.) what shall become of the honour and holiness of the gospel on this supposition ? Must it not be looked on as a doctrine less holy than that of the law ? For, whereas the law required absolute, perfect, sinless holiness

unto our justification, the gospel admits of that to the same end, on this supposition, which is every way imperfect, and consistent with a multitude of sins and failings? What can be spoken more to the derogation of it? Nay, would not this indeed make 'Christ the minister of sin,' which our apostle rejects with so much detestation? Gal. ii. 17. For to say, that he hath merited that our imperfect obedience, attended with many and great sins ('for there is no man that liveth and sinneth not',) should be accepted unto our justification, instead of perfect and sinless obedience required under the law, is plainly to make him the minister of sin, or one that hath acquired some liberty for sin, beyond whatever the law allowed. And thus, upon the whole matter, both Christ and the gospel, in whom and whereby, God unquestionably designed to declare the holiness and righteousness of his own nature, much more gloriously than ever he had done any other way, should be the great means to darken and obscure them. For in and by them, on this supposition, God must be thought (and is declared) to accept of a righteousness unto our justification, unspeakably inferior unto what he required before.

It must be granted, therefore, that the end of gospel commands, requiring the obedience of holiness in us, is not, that thereby or thereon we should be justified. God hath therein provided another righteousness for that end, which fully, perfectly, absolutely, answers all that the law requires; and on some considerations is far more glorious than what the law either did or could require. And hereby hath he exalted more than ever the honour of his own holiness and righteousness, whereof the external instrument is the gospel, which is also, therefore, most holy: now this is no other but the righteousness of Christ imputed unto us; for he is the 'end of the law for righteousness unto them that do believe;' Rom. x. 4. But God hath now appointed other ends unto our holiness, and so unto his command of it, under the gospel, all of them consistent with the nature of that obedience which he will accept of us, and such as we may attain through the power of grace, and so all of them offering new encouragements as well as enforcements unto our endeavours after it. But because these ends will be the subject of most of our ensuing arguments, I shall not here insist upon them. I shall only add two things in general.

[1.] That God hath no design for his own glory, in us or by us, in this world or unto eternity, that there is no especial communion that we can have with him by Jesus Christ, nor any capacity for us to enjoy him, but holiness is necessary unto it, as a means unto its end. [2.] These present ends of it under the gospel are such, as that God doth no less indispensably require it of us now, than he did when our justification was proposed as the end of it. They are such, in brief, as God upon the account of them judgeth meet to command us to be holy in all manner of holiness, which what obligation and necessity it puts upon us so to be, we are now to inquire.

First, The first thing considerable in the *command* of God to this purpose, is the *authority* wherewith it is accompanied. It is indispensably necessary that we should be holy, on the account of the authority of God's command. Authority wherever it is just, and exerted in a due and equal manner, carrieth along with it an obligation unto obedience. Take this away, and you will fill the whole world with disorder. If the authority of parents, masters, and magistrates, did not oblige children, servants, and subjects, unto obedience, the world could not abide one moment out of hellish confusion. God himself maketh use of this argument in general, to convince men of the necessity of obedience. 'A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if I then be a father where is mine honour, and if I be a master where is my fear, saith the Lord of hosts unto you priests who despise my name;' Mal. i. 6. If in all particular relations, where there is any thing of superiority, which hath the least parcel of authority accompanying of it, obedience is expected and exacted; is it not due to me who have all authority, of all sovereign relations in me towards you? And there are two things that enforce the obligation from the command on this consideration, *jus imperandi*, and *vis exequendi*, both comprised in that of the apostle James, iv. 12. 'There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.

1. He who *commands* us to be holy, is our *sovereign lawgiver;* he that hath *absolute* power to prescribe unto us what *laws* he pleaseth. When commands come from them who have authority, and yet are themselves also under authority, there may be some secret abatement of the power of the

command. Men may think either to appeal from them, or one way or other subduct themselves from under their power. But when the power immediately commanding is sovereign and absolute, there is no room for tergiversation. The command of God proceeds from the absolute power of a sovereign legislator. And where it is not complied withal, the whole authority of God, and therein God himself, is despised. So God in many places calleth sinning against his commands, the 'despising of him;' Numb. xi. 20. 1 Sam. ii. 30. the 'despising of his name;' Mal. i. 6. the 'despising of his commandment,' and that in his saints themselves; 2 Sam. xii. 10.

Being then under the command of God to be holy, not to endeavour always and in all things so to be, is to despise God, to reject his sovereign authority over us, and to live in defiance of him. This state, I suppose, there are few who would be willing to be found in: to be constant despisers of God, and rebels against his authority, is a charge that men are not ready to own, and do suppose that those who are so indeed, are in a very ill condition. But this and no better is the state of every one who is not holy, who doth not follow after holiness. Yet so it is, propose unto men the true nature of evangelical holiness, press them to the duties wherein the exercise of it doth consist, convince them with evidence as clear as the light at noon-day, that such and such sins, such and such courses wherein they live and walk, are absolutely inconsistent with it, and irreconcilable unto it, yet for the most part it is but little they will heed you, and less they will do to answer your exhortations. Tell the same persons, that they are rebels against God, despisers of him, that they have utterly broken the yoke, and cast off his authority, and they will defy you, and perhaps revile you. But yet these things are inseparable; God having given his command unto men to be holy, declared his sovereign will and pleasure therein, if we are not so accordingly, we are not one jot better than the persons described. Here then, in the first place, we found the necessity of holiness on the command of God. The authority wherewith it is accompanied makes it necessary: yea, from hence if we endeavour not to thrive in it, if we watch not diligently against every thing that is contrary unto it, we are therein and so

far despisers of God, and his name, as in the places before cited.

This, therefore, evidenceth unto the consciences of men, that the obligation unto holiness is indispensable. And it would do well, if we always carried this formal consideration of the commandment in our minds; nothing is more prevalent with us unto watchfulness in holiness, as nothing doth more effectually render what we do, to be obedience properly so called. Forgetfulness hereof, or not heeding it as we ought, is the great reason of our loose and careless walking, of our defect in making a progress in grace and holiness. No man is safe a moment, whose mind by any means is dispossessed of a sense of the sovereign authority of God in his commands; nor can any thing secure such a soul from being pierced and entered into by various temptations. This, therefore, are we to carry about with us wherever we go, and whatever we do, to keep our souls and consciences under the power of it, in all opportunities of duties, and on all occasions of sin. Had men always, in their ways, trades, shops, affairs, families, studies, closets, this written on their hearts, they would have holiness to the Lord on their breasts and foreheads also.

2. The apostle tells us, that as God in his *commands* is a *sovereign lawgiver*, so he *is able to kill and keep alive*. That is, his commanding authority is accompanied with such a power, as that whereby he is able absolutely and eternally to reward the obedient, and to return unto the disobedient a meet recompense of punishment. For, although I would not exclude other considerations, yet I think this of eternal rewards and punishments to be principally here intended.

But, (1.) supposing it to have respect unto things *temporal* also, it carries along with it the greater *enforcement*. God commands us to be holy: things are in that state and condition in the world, as that if we endeavour to answer his will in a due manner, designing to 'perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord,' we shall meet with much opposition, many difficulties, and at length, perhaps, it may cost us our lives; multitudes have made profession of it at no cheaper rate. But let us not mistake in this matter; he who commands us to be holy is the only sovereign Lord of life and death, that hath alone the disposal of them both, and consequently of

all things that are subservient and conducing unto the one or the other. It is he alone who can kill in a way of punishment, and he alone can keep alive in a way of merciful preservation. This power of our lawgiver, the holy companions of Daniel committed themselves unto, and preserved themselves by the consideration of, when with the terror of death they were commanded to forsake the way of holiness; Dan. iii. 17, 18. And with respect unto it, our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, that he who 'would save his life,' namely, by a sinful neglect of the command, 'shall lose it.' This, therefore, is also to be considered; the power of him who commands us to be holy is such, as that he is able to carry us through all difficulties and dangers which we may incur upon the account of our being so. Now whereas the fear of man is one principal cause or means of our failing in holiness and obedience, either by sudden surprisals, or violent temptations, and the next hereunto, is the consideration of other things, esteemed good or evil in this world; the faith and sense hereof will bear us up above them, deliver us from them, and carry us through them.

Be of good courage all ye that trust in the Lord; you may, you ought, without fear or dauntedness of spirit, to engage into the pursuit of universal holiness: he who hath commanded it, who hath required it of you, will bear you out in it; nothing that is truly evil or finally disadvantageous shall befall you on that account. For (let the world rage whilst it pleaseth, and threaten to fill all things with blood and confusion) 'to God the Lord belong the issues from death,' he alone can 'kill' and 'make alive.' There is, therefore, no small enforcement unto holiness, from the consideration of the command, with respect unto the power of the commander, relating unto things in this world.

But, (2.) I suppose it is a *power* of *eternal rewards and punishments*, that is principally here intended. The killing here, is that mentioned by our Saviour, and opposed to all temporal evil, and death itself; Matt. x. 28. 'Fear not them who can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' And this 'keeping alive,' is a deliverance from the wrath to come in everlasting life. And this is that which gives an unavoidable efficacy to the command. Every com-

mand of a superior, doth tacitly include a reward and punishment to be intended. For a declaration is made of what is pleasing and what is displeasing unto him that gives the command; and therein is there a virtual promise and threatening. But unto all solemn laws, rewards and punishments are expressly annexed.

But there are two reasons why, for the most part, they do but little *influence* the minds of men who are inclined unto their *transgression*. [1.] The first is, that the *rewards* and *punishments* declared, are such as men think they do justly prefer their own *satisfaction*, in the transgression of the laws, before them. It is so with all good men, with respect unto laws made contrary to the laws of God; and wise men also may do so with respect unto useless laws, with trifling penalties; and evil men will do so, with respect unto the highest temporal punishments, when they are greedily set on the satisfaction of their lusts. Hence I say it is, in the first place, that the minds of men are so little influenced with those rewards and punishments, that are annexed unto human laws. And, [2.] a *secret apprehension* that the *commanders* or makers of the laws, neither will, nor are able, to *execute* those *penalties* in case of their transgression, evacuates all the *force* of them. Much they ascribe to their negligence, that they will not take care to see the sanction of their laws executed; more to their ignorance, that they shall not be able to find out their transgressions; and somewhat in sundry cases to their power, that they cannot punish nor reward, though they would. And for these reasons, are the minds of men little influenced by human laws beyond their own honest inclinations and interest. But things are quite otherwise with respect unto the law and commands of God that we should be holy. The rewards and punishments, called by the apostle 'killing' and 'keeping alive,' being eternal, in the highest capacities of blessedness or misery, cannot be balanced by any consideration of this present world, without the highest folly and villany unto ourselves. Nor can there be any reserve on the account of mutability, indifferency, ignorance, impotency, or any other pretence, that they shall not be executed. Wherefore, the commands of God, which we are in the consideration of, are accompanied with promises and threatenings, of eternal blessedness on the one hand, or of misery on

the other. And these will certainly befall us, according as we shall be found holy or unholy. All the properties of the nature of God are immutably engaged in this matter; and hence ensues an indispensable necessity of our being holy. God commands that we should be so, but what if we are not so? Why, as sure as God is holy and powerful we shall eternally perish, for with the threatening of that condition, is his command accompanied in case of disobedience. What if we do comply with the command, and become holy? Upon the same ground of assurance, we shall be brought unto everlasting felicity. And this is greatly to be considered in the authority of the commandment. Some, perhaps, will say, that to yield holy obedience unto God, with respect unto rewards and punishments, is servile, and becomes not the free spirit of the children of God. But these are vain imaginations: the bondage of our own spirits may make every thing we do servile. But a due respect unto God's promises and threatenings, is a principal part of our liberty. And thus doth the necessity of holiness, which we are engaged in the demonstration of, depend on the command of God, because of that authority from whence it doth proceed, and wherewith it is accompanied. It is, therefore, certainly our duty, if we would be found walking in a course of obedience, and the practice of holiness, to keep a sense hereof constantly fixed on our minds. This is that which, in the first place, God intends in that great injunction of obedience, Gen. xvii. 1. 'I am God Almighty, walk before me, and be thou perfect.' The way to walk uprightly, to be sincere or perfect in obedience, is always to consider, that he who requires it of us is God Almighty, accompanied with all the authority and power before mentioned, and under whose eye we are continually. And, in particular, we may apply this unto persons and occasions.

[1.] As to *persons*. Let them in an especial manner have a continual *regard* hereunto, who on any account are *great*, or *high*, or *noble*, in the world, and that because their especial temptation is to be *lifted* up unto a forgetfulness or regardlessness of this *authority* of God. The prophet distributes incorrigible sinners into two sorts, and gives the different grounds of their impenitency respectively. The first are the poor; and it is their folly, stupidity, and sensual lusts

that keep them off from attending to the command; Jer. v. 3, 4. 'They have refused to receive correction, they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return; therefore I said, Surely these are poor, they are sottish, for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.' There is a sort of poor incorrigible sinn rs, whose impenitency ariseth much out of their ignorance, blindness, and folly, which they please themselves in, although they differ but little from the beasts that perish. And such do we abound withal, who will take no pains for, who will admit of no means of, instruction. But there is another sort of sinners to whom the prophet makes his application, and discovers the ground of their incorrigible impenitency also; 'I will get me to the great men, and will speak unto them, for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God;' v. 5. Great men, by reason of their education and other advantages, do attain unto a knowledge of the will of God, or at least may be thought so to have done, and would be esteemed to excel therein. They, therefore, are not likely to be obstinate in sin, merely from stupid ignorance and folly. No, saith the prophet, they take another course; 'they have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.' They are like a company of rude beasts of the field, who having broken their yokes and cords, do run up and down the fields, treading down the corn, breaking up the fences, pushing with the horn, and trampling on all before them. This is the course of men in the pursuit of their lusts, when they have 'broken the yoke of the Lord.' And this the prophet declares to be the especial evil of great men, the rich, the mighty, the honourable in the world. Now this 'breaking of the yoke,' is the neglecting and despising of the authority of God in the command. Seeing, therefore, that this is the especial temptation of that sort of persons, and things innumerable there are of all sorts, that concur to render that temptation prevalent upon them, let all those who are of that condition, and have the least sincere desire after holiness, watch diligently, as they love and value their souls, to keep always, and in all things, a due sense of the authority of God in his commands upon their minds and consciences. When you are in the height of your greatness, in the fulness of your enjoyments,

in the most urgent of your avocations by the things or societies of the world, and those who belong to it, when the variety of public appearances and attendencies are about you, where you are uppermost in the words of others, and it may be in your own thoughts, remember him who is over all, and consider that you are subject and obnoxious unto his authority, equally with the poorest creature on the earth. Remember that it is your especial temptation to do otherwise: and if you do yet abhor those who by this means are come to be sons of Belial, or such as have altogether broken the yoke, and run up and down the world in the pursuit of their lusts, saying, 'Our lips are our own, and who is Lord over us,' be you watchful against the least beginnings or entrances of it in yourselves.

[2.] In *general*, let us all endeavour to carry a constant regard unto the *authority* of God in his *commands*, into all those *seasons, places, societies, occasions*, wherein we are apt to be surprised in any *sin*, or a neglect of *duty*. And I may reduce this instruction, or point it unto three heads or occasions; namely, *secrecy, businesses*, and *societies*. 1st. Carry this along with you into your *secret retirements* and *enjoyments*. Neglect hereof is the next cause of those secret actual provoking sins which the world swarms with. When no eye sees but the eye of God, men think themselves secure. Hereby have many been surprised into folly, which hath proved the beginning of a total apostacy. An awe from the authority of God in the command upon the heart, will equally secure us in all places, and on all occasions. 2ndly. Let us carry it into our *businesses*, and the exercise of our *trades* or *callings*. Most men in these things, are very apt to be intent on present occasions, and having a certain end before them, do habituate themselves unto the ways of its attainment. And whilst they are so engaged, many things occur which are apt to divert them from the rule of holiness. Whenever, therefore, you enter into your occasions, wherein you may suppose that temptations will arise, call to mind the greatness, power, and authority over you, of him who hath commanded you in all things to be holy. Upon every entrance of a surprisal, make your retreat into such thoughts which will prove your relief. 3rdly. Carry it with you into your *companies* and *societies*. For many have

frequent occasions of engaging in such societies, as wherein the least forgetfulness of the sovereign authority of God, will betray them unto profuseness in vanity, and corrupt communication, until they do with delight, and hear with pleasure, such things as wherewith the Holy Spirit of God is grieved, their own consciences are defiled, and the honour of profession is cast to the ground.

Secondly, The *command* of God that we should be *holy*, is not to be considered only as an effect of *power* and *authority* which we *must* submit unto, but as a fruit of *infinite wisdom* and *goodness* also, which it is our *highest advantage* and interest to comply withal. And this introduceth a peculiar necessity of holiness, from the consideration of what is equal, reasonable, ingenuous; the contrary whereunto is foolish, perverse, ungrateful, every way unbecoming rational creatures. Where nothing can be discerned in commands, but mere authority, will, and pleasure; they are looked on as merely respecting the good of them that command, and not at all theirs who are to obey, which disheartens and weakens the principle of obedience. Now, though God, because his dominion over us is sovereign and absolute, might have justly left unto us no other reason or motive of our obedience, and, it may be, did so deal with the church of old, as to some particular temporary ceremonial institutions; yet he doth not, nor ever did so, as to the main of their obedience. But as he proposeth his law as an effect of infinite wisdom, love, and goodness, so he declares and pleads, that all his commands are just and equal in themselves, good and useful unto us, and that our compliance with them is our present, as well as it will be our future, happiness. And that this is so, that the command of God requiring that we should be holy, as a fruit of wisdom and goodness, is equal and advantageous unto ourselves, appears from all the considerations of it.

First, Look upon it *formally*, as a *law prescribed* unto us, and it is so because the obedience in *holiness* which it requires, is *proportioned* unto the *strength* and *power* which we have to *obey*, which declares it *equal* unto us, and an effect of infinite *wisdom* and *goodness* in God. The command, as we shewed before, may be considered either as it belonged unto the old covenant, or as it is annexed unto, and so is a part of, the

new. In the first way, as it belonged unto the old covenant, the strength of grace which we had originally from God under the law of creation, was sufficient to enable us unto all that holy obedience which was required therein; and our not doing so, was from wilful rebellion, and not from any impotency or weakness in us. We fell not from our first estate for want of power to obey, but by the neglect of the exercise of that power which we had. God made us upright, but we sought out many inventions. And in the latter way, as it belongs to the covenant of grace, there is by virtue of that covenant a supply of spiritual strength given in by the promise, unto all them who are taken into it, enabling them to answer the commands for holiness, according to the rule of the acceptance of their obedience, before laid down. No man who is instated in the covenant of grace, comes short or fails of the performance of that obedience which is required and accepted in that covenant, merely for want of power and spiritual strength. For God therein, 'according to his divine power gives unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue;' 1 Pet. i. 3.

It is true, this grace or strength, is administered unto them by certain ways and means, which if they attend not unto, they will come short of it. But, this I say, in the careful, diligent, sedulous use of those means appointed, none who belong to the covenant of grace, shall ever fail of that power and ability which shall render the commands of the gospel easy and not grievous unto them, and whereby they may so fulfil them, as infallibly to be accepted. This the Scripture is plain in, where Christ himself tells us, that 'his yoke is easy, and his burden light;' Matt. xi. 30. and his holy apostle, that 'his commands are not grievous;' 1 John v. 3. For, if they should exceed all the strength which we either have, or he is pleased to give unto us, they would be like the Jewish ceremonies, a yoke which we could not bear, and a law not only grievous but unprofitable. But on the contrary, our apostle expressly affirms, and so may we, 'that he could do all things,' that is, in the way and manner, and unto the end for which they are required in the gospel, 'through Christ that strengthened him.' Some would confound these things, and cast all into disorder. They would

have men that are under the old covenant, to have a power and spiritual strength to fulfil the commands of the new, which God hath never spoken of nor declared, and which indeed is contrary to the whole design of his grace. They would have men, who having broken the old covenant, and forfeited all their strength and ability which they had by it for obedience, and are not initiated in the new covenant, yet to have a power of their own to fulfil the command of the one or the other, which God neither giveth, nor is obliged to give, nor is it necessary to prove that the command is equal and holy. For, as was observed, God giveth us no command of holiness and obedience, but in, with, and by virtue of, some covenant. And there is no more required to prove them to be just and equal, but they are easy unto them who walk with God in that covenant whereunto they do belong, and that that performance of them shall be accepted which they have power for. If any will sinfully cast away their covenant, interest, and privilege, as we did all that of our original creation, we must thank ourselves if we have not power to answer its commands. Nor doth it belong unto the equity of the command of the new covenant, that those who are not yet made partakers of it by grace, should have power to fulfil them. Nay, if they had so, and should do so accordingly (were any such thing possible), it would not avail them. For, being supposed not as yet to belong unto the new covenant, they must belong unto the old. And the performance of the commands of the new covenant in the way and manner which are required therein, would not avail them who are really under the rule and law of the old, which admits of nothing short of absolute perfection. But what the 'law speaks, it speaks unto them that are under the law;' and what the gospel speaks, it speaks unto them 'who are not under the law, but under grace.' And the formal transition of men from one of these states unto another, is by an act of God's grace, wherein themselves are merely passive, as hath elsewhere been demonstrated. See Col. i. 13.

This is that which I do intend. God at first made a covenant with mankind, the first covenant, the covenant of works. Herein he gave them commands for holy obedience. These commands were not only possible unto them, both for matter and manner, by virtue of that strength and power

which was concreated with them, but easy and pleasant, every way suited unto their good and satisfaction in that state and condition. This rendered their obedience equal, just, reasonable, and aggravated their sin with the guilt of the most horrible folly and ingratitude. When by the fall this covenant was broken, we lost therewith all power and ability to comply with its commands in holy obedience. Hereupon, the 'law continued holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good,' as our apostle speaks, Rom. vii. 12. For what should make it otherwise, seeing there was no change in it by sin, nor did God require more or harder things of us than before? But to us it became impossible, for we had lost the strength by which alone we were enabled to observe it. And so 'the commandment which was ordained to life, we find to be unto death;' Rom. vii. 10. Towards all, therefore, that remain in that state, we say, the commandment is still just and holy, but it is neither easy nor possible. Hereon God brings in the covenant of grace by Christ, and renews therein the commands for holy obedience, as was before declared. And here it is, that men trouble themselves and others about the power, ability, and free-will that men have as yet under the first covenant, and the impotence that ensued on the transgression of it to fulfil the condition of the new covenant, and yield the obedience required in it. For this is the place where men make their great contests about the power of free-will, and the possibility of God's command. Let them but grant, that it is the mere work of God's sovereign and almighty grace effectually to instate men in the new covenant, and we shall contend with them or against them, that by virtue thereof, they have that spiritual strength and grace administered unto them, as render all the commands of it to be not only possible but easy also, yea, pleasant, and every way suited unto the principle of a holy life wherewith they are endued. And this we make an argument for the necessity of holiness. The argument we have under consideration, is that whereby we prove the necessity of holiness with respect unto God's command requiring it, because it is a fruit of infinite wisdom and goodness. It is so in an especial manner as it belongs unto the new covenant. And therefore, by our disobedience or living in sin, unto the contempt of God's authority, we add that of his

wisdom and goodness also. Now that it is so a fruit of them, appears in the first place from hence, that it is proportioned unto the strength and ability which we have to obey. Hence obedience in holiness becomes equal, easy, and pleasant unto all believers who sincerely attend unto it. And this fully evinceth the necessity of it, from the folly and ingratitude of the contrary. That these things, and in them the force of the present argument may the better be apprehended, I shall dispose them into the ensuing observations.

1. We do not say, that any one hath this *power* and *ability in himself*, or *from himself*. God hath not in the new covenant brought down his command to the power of man, but by his grace he raiseth the power of man unto his command: the former were only a compliance with the sin of our nature, which God abhors; the latter is the exaltation of his own grace, which he aimeth at. It is not men's strength in and of themselves, the power of nature, but the grace which is administered in the covenant, that we intend. For men to trust unto themselves herein, as though they could do any thing of themselves, is a renunciation of all the aids of grace, without which we can do nothing. We can have no power from Christ, unless we live in a persuasion that we have none of our own. Our whole spiritual life is a life of faith; and that is, a life of dependance on Christ for what we have not of ourselves. This is that which ruins the attempt of many for holiness, and renders what they do (though it be like unto the acts and duties of it), not at all to belong unto it. For, what we do in our own strength, is no part of holiness; as is evident from the preceding description of it. Neither doth the Scripture abound in any thing more, than in testifying that the power and ability we have to fulfil the commands of God as given in the new covenant, is not our own, nor from ourselves, but merely from the grace of God administered in that covenant; as John xv. 5. Phil. ii. 13. 2 Cor. iii. 5. It will be said then, where lies the difference? Because it is the mere work of grace to instate us in the covenant, you conclude that we have no power of our own to that purpose. And if when we are in covenant, all our strength and power is still from grace, we are, as to any ability of our own to fulfil the command of God, as remote from it as ever. I answer: the first work of grace is merely upon us. Here-

by the image of God is renewed, our hearts are changed, and a principle of spiritual life is bestowed on us. But this latter work of grace is in us, and by us. And the strength or ability which we have thereby, is as truly our own as Adam's was his, which he had in the state of innocency. For he had his immediately from God, and so have we ours, though in a different way.

2. There is no such *provision* of *spiritual strength* for any man, enabling him to comply with the *command* of God for *holiness*, as to countenance him in the least *carnal security*, or the least *neglect* of the diligent use of all those *means* which God hath appointed for the communication thereof unto us, with the *preservation* and *increase* of it. God who hath determined graciously to give us supplies thereof, hath also declared, that we are obliged unto our utmost diligence for the participation of them, and unto their due exercise when received. This innumerable commands and injunctions give testimony unto; but especially is the whole method of God's grace and our duty herein, declared by the apostle Peter, 2 Epist. i. 3—11. which discourse I have opened and improved elsewhere. The sum is, that God creating in us a new spiritual nature, and therewithal giving unto us 'all things appertaining unto life and godliness,' or a gracious ability for the duties of a holy, godly, spiritual life, we are obliged to use all means in the continual exercise of all grace, which will ascertain unto us our eternal election, with our effectual vocation, whereon we shall obtain an assured joyful entrance into the kingdom of glory.

3. This administration of *grace* and *spiritual strength* is not *equally effectual* at *all* times. There are seasons, wherein to correct our negligences in giving place to our corruptions and temptations, or on other grounds to discover unto us our own frailty and impotency, with other holy ends of his own, that God is pleased to withhold the powerful influences of his grace, and to leave us unto ourselves. In such instances we shall assuredly come short of answering the command for universal holiness, one way or other. See Psal. xxx. 6, 7. But I speak of ordinary cases, and to prevent that slothfulness and tergiversation unto this duty of complying with all the commands of God for holiness, which we are so obnoxious unto.

4. We do not say, that there is in the *covenant of grace* spiritual *strength* administered, so as that by virtue thereof we should yield *sinless and absolutely perfect obedience* unto God, or to render any one duty so *absolutely perfect*. If any such there are, or ever were, who maintain such an imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto us, as should render our own personal obedience unnecessary, they do overthrow the truth and holiness of the gospel. And to say, that we have such supplies of internal strength, as to render the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto our justification unnecessary, is to overthrow the grace of the gospel, and the new covenant itself. But this alone we say; there is grace administered by the promises of the gospel, enabling us to perform the obedience of it, in that way and manner as God will accept. And herein there are various degrees, whereof we ought constantly to aim at the most complete, and so to be perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. And where we signally come short of the best rules and examples, it is principally from our neglect of those supplies of grace which are tendered in the promises.

5. There is a twofold *gracious power* necessary to render the command for *holiness* and *obedience* thereunto *easy* and *pleasant*.

(1.) That which is *habitually resident* in the hearts and souls of *believers*, whereby they are constantly inclined and disposed unto all *fruits* of *holiness*. This the Scripture calls our life, a new principle of life, without which we are dead in trespasses and sins; where this is not, whatever arguments you constrain and press men withal to be holy, you do, as it were, but offer violence unto them, endeavouring to force them against the fixed bent and inclination of their minds. By them all you do but set up a dam against a stream of waters, which will not be permanent, nor turn the course of the stream contrary to its natural inclination. Unto such the command for holiness must needs be grievous and difficult. But such a disposition and inclination, or a principle so inclining, and disposing of us unto duties of holiness, we have not in nor of ourselves by nature; nor is it to be raised out of its ruins. For the 'carnal mind' (which is in us all) 'is enmity against God,' which carrieth in it an aversation unto every thing that is required of us in a

way of obedience, as hath been proved at large. And yet without this habitual principle, we can never in a due manner comply with any one command of God that we should be holy. Want hereof is that which renders obedience so grievous and burdensome unto many. They endure it for a season, and at length either violently or insensibly cast off its yoke. Light and conviction have compelled them to take it on themselves, and to attend unto the performance of those duties which they dare not omit. But having no principle enabling or inclining them unto it, all they do, though they do much, and continue long therein, is against the grain with them, they find it difficult, uneasy and wearisome. Wherein they can by any pretences countenance themselves in a neglect of any part of it, or bribe their consciences into a compliance with what is contrary unto it, they fail not to deliver themselves from their burden. And, for the most part, either insensibly by multiplied instances of the neglect of duties of obedience, or by some great temptations, before they leave the world, they utterly leave all the ways of holiness, and respect unto the commands of God; or if they continue any, it is unto external acts of morality which pass with approbation in the world, the inward and spiritual part of obedience they utterly renounce. The reason hereof, I say, is, because having no principle within, enabling them unto a compliance with the commands of God, with delight and satisfaction, they grow grievous and intolerable unto them. So unto many on the same ground, the worship of God is very burdensome, unless it be borne for them, by external additions and ornaments.

(2.) There is an *actual assistance* of *effectual grace* required hereunto. We are not put into that condition by the covenant, as that we should be able to do any thing of ourselves, without actual divine assistance. This were to set us free from our dependance on God, and to make us gods unto ourselves. The root still bears us, and the springs of our spiritual life are in another. And where both these are, there the command is equal not only in itself, but unto us, and obedience unto it as easy as just.

6. And both these sorts of *grace* are administered in the *new covenant*, suited unto the holy obedience it requires.

(1.) For the *first*, it is that which God so frequently, so

expressly promiseth, where he says, that he will 'take away the heart of stone, and give us a heart of flesh; that he will write his laws in our hearts, and put his fear in our inward parts;' that we shall 'fear him,' and 'never depart from him;' that he will 'circumcise our hearts' to 'know' and 'love' him: which promises, and the *nature* of the grace contained in them, I have before at large explained. It is sufficient unto our present purpose, that in and by these *promises,* we are *made partakers of the divine nature,* and are therein endowed with a constant *habitual disposition* and *inclination* unto all acts and duties of *holiness;* for our *power* followeth our *love* and *inclinations,* as *impotency* is a consequent of their defect.

And here we may stay a little, to confirm our principal assertion. Upon the supply of this grace, which gives both strength for, and a constant inclination unto, holy obedience, the command for it becomes equal and just, meet and easy to be complied withal. For none can refuse a compliance with it in any instance, but their so doing is contrary unto that disposition and inclination of the new nature which God hath implanted in themselves. So that in them to sin, is not only contrary to the law without them, to the light of their minds, and warning of their consciences, but it is also unto that which is their own inclination and disposition, which hath sensibly in such cases a force and violence put upon it, by the power of corruptions and temptations. Wherefore, although the command for holiness may and doth seem grievous and burdensome unto unregenerate persons, as we have observed, because it is against the habitual bent and inclination of their whole souls; yet neither is it, nor can it be, so unto them who cannot neglect it, or act any thing against it, but that therein, also, they must crucify and offer violence unto the inclinations of the new creature in them, which are their own. For in all things, 'the spirit lusteth against the flesh;' Gal. v. 17. and the disposition of the new creature is habitually against sin, and for holiness. And this gives a mighty constraining power unto the command, when it is evident in our own minds and consciences, that it requires nothing of us but what we do or may find an inclination or disposition in our own hearts unto. And by this consideration we may take in the power of it upon our souls, which is too fre-

quently disregarded. Let us but upon the proposal of it unto us, consider what our minds and hearts say to it, what answer they return, and we shall quickly discern how equal and just the command is. For, I cannot persuade myself, that any believer can be so captivated, at any time, under the power of temptations, corruptions, or prejudices, but that (if he will but take counsel with his own soul, upon the consideration of the command for obedience and holiness, and ask himself what he would have) he will have a plain and sincere answer, That indeed I would do and have the good proposed, this holiness, this duty of obedience. Not only will conscience answer, that he must not do the evil whereunto temptation leadeth, for if he doth evil will ensue thereon; but the new nature, and his mind and spirit will say, This good I would do, I delight in it, it is best for me, most suited unto me. And so it joins all the strength and interest it hath in the soul, with the command. See to this purpose the arguing of our apostle, Rom. vii. 20—22. It is true, there is a natural light in conscience, complying with the command in its proposal, and urging obedience thereunto, which doth not make it easy to us, but where it is alone, increaseth its burden and our bondage; for it doth only give in its suffrage unto the sanction of the command, and adds to the severity wherewith it is attended. But that compliance with the command which is from a principle of grace, is quite of another nature, and greatly facilitates obedience. And we may distinguish between that compliance with the command which is from the natural light of conscience, which genders unto bondage, and that which being from a renewed principle of grace, gives liberty and ease in obedience. For, the first respects principally the consequent of obedience or disobedience, the good or evil that will ensue upon them; Rom. ii. 14, 15. Set aside this consideration, and it hath no more to say: but the latter respects the command itself, which it embraceth, delighteth in, and judgeth good and holy, with the duties themselves required, which are natural, and suited thereunto.

(2.) *Grace* of the *latter* sort also, *actual grace* for every holy act and duty, is administered unto us according to the *promise* of the *gospel*. So God told Paul, that 'his grace was sufficient for him.' And he 'worketh in us both to will

and to do, of his own good pleasure;' Phil. ii. 13. so as that we 'may do all things,' through him that enables us, the nature of which grace also hath been before discoursed of. Now, although this actual working of grace be not in the power of the wills of men, to make use of or refuse as they see good, but its administration depends merely on the grace and faithfulness of God, yet this I must say, that where it is sought in a due manner by faith and prayer, it is never so restrained from any believer, but that it shall be effectual in him, unto the whole of that obedience which is required of him, and as it will be accepted from him.

If then this be the condition of the command of holiness, how just and equal must it needs be confessed to be, and therefore how highly reasonable is it that we should comply with it, and how great is their sin and folly by whom it is neglected! It is true, we are absolutely obliged unto obedience by the mere authority of God who commands; but he not only allows us to take in, but directs us to seek after, these other considerations of it, which may give it force and efficacy upon our souls and consciences. And among these, none is more efficacious towards gracious ingenuous souls, than this of the contemperation of the duties commanded, unto spiritual aids of strength promised unto us. For what cloak or pretence of dislike or neglect is here left unto any? Wherefore, not only the authority of God in giving a command, but the infinite wisdom and goodness of God in giving such a command, so just, equal, and gentle, fall upon us therein, to oblige us to holy obedience. To neglect or despise this command, is to neglect or despise God, in that way which he hath chosen to manifest all the holy properties of his nature.

Secondly, The *command* is *equal*, and so to be esteemed from the *matter* of it, or the *things* that it doth require. Things they are that are neither great nor grievous, much less perverse, useless, or evil; Micah vi. 6—8. There is nothing in the holiness which the command requires, but what is good to him in whom it is, and useful to all others concerned in him, or what he doth. What they are, the apostle mentions in his exhortation unto them; Phil. iv. 8. They are 'things true,' and 'honest,' and 'just,' and 'pure,' and 'lovely,' and of 'good report,' and what evil is there in any of

these things, that we should decline the command that requires them? The more we abound in them, the better it will be for our relations, our families, our neighbours, the whole nation, and the world, but best of all for ourselves. 'Godliness is profitable unto all things;' 1 Tim. iv. 8. 'These things are good and profitable unto men;' Tit. iii. 8. Good to them that do them, and good to those towards whom they are done. But both these things, namely, the usefulness of holiness unto ourselves and others, must be spoken unto distinctly afterward, and are, therefore, transmitted unto their proper place.

As, therefore, it was before observed, it is incumbent on us, in the first place, to endeavour after holiness, and the improvement of it, with respect unto the command of God that we should be holy, and because of it, and that especially under the consideration of it which we have insisted on. I know not what vain imaginations have seemed to possess the minds of some, that they have no need of respect unto the command, nor to the promises and threatenings of it, but to obey merely from the power and guidance of an inward principle. Nay, some have supposed, that a respect unto the command would vitiate our obedience, rendering it legal and servile. But I hope, that darkness which hindered men from discerning the harmony and compliance which is between the principle of grace in us, and the authority of the command upon us, is much taken away from all sincere professors. It is a respect unto the command which gives the formal nature of obedience unto what we do. And without a due regard unto it, there is nothing of holiness in us. Some would make the light of nature to be their rule, some in what they do, look no farther for their measure than what carries the reputation of common honesty among men. He that would be holy indeed, must always mind the command of God, with that reverence and those affections which become him to whom God speaks immediately. And that it may be effectual towards us, we may consider:

1. How God hath *multiplied his commands* unto this purpose, to testify not only his own infinite *care* of us, and *love* unto us, but also our eternal *concernment* in what he requires. He doth not give out unto us a single command that we should be holy (which yet were sufficient to oblige us for

ever), but he gives his commands unto that purpose, 'line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept.' He that shall but look over the Bible, and see almost every page of it filled with commands, or directions, or instructions for holiness; cannot but conclude, that the mind and will of God is very much in this matter, and that our concernment therein is inexpressible. Nor doth God content himself to multiply commands in general, that we should be holy, so as that if we have regard unto him they may never be out of our remembrance, but there is not any particular duty or instance of holiness, but he hath given us especial commands for that also. No man can instance in the least duty that belongs directly unto it, but it falls under some especial command of God. We are not only then under the command of God in general, and that often reiterated unto us, in an awful reverence whereof we ought to walk, but upon all occasions, whatever we have to do or avoid in following after holiness, is represented unto us in especial commands to that purpose. And they are all of them a fruit of the love and care of God towards us. Is it not then our duty always to consider these commands, to bind them unto our hearts, and our hearts to them, that nothing may separate them? O that they might always dwell in our minds, to influence them unto an inward constant watch against the first disorders of our souls, that are unsuited to the inward holiness God requires, abide with us in our closets, and all our occasions for our good.

2. We may do well to consider what *various enforcements* God is pleased to give unto those *multiplied commands*. He doth not remit us merely to their authority, but he applieth all other ways and means whereby they may be made effectual. Hence are they accompanied with exhortations, entreaties, reasonings, expostulations, promises, threatenings, all made use of to fasten the command upon our minds and, consciences. God knows how slow and backward we are to receive due impressions from his authority; and he knows by what ways and means the principles of our internal faculties are apt to be wrought upon, and therefore applies these engines to fix the power of the command upon us. Were these things to be treated of severally, it is manifest how great a part of the Scripture were to be transcribed. I shall,

therefore, only take a little notice of the reinforcement of the command for holiness, by those especial promises which are given unto it. I do not intend now the promises of the gospel in general, wherein in its own way and place we are interested by holiness, but of such peculiar promises as God enforceth the command by. It is not for nothing that it is said, that 'godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;' 1 Tim. iv. 8. There is in all the promises an especial respect unto it, and it gives them in whom it is an especial interest in all the promises.

This is, as it were, the text which our Saviour preached his first sermon upon. For all the blessings which he pronounceth consist in giving particular instances of some parts of holiness, annexing an especial promise unto each of them. 'Blessed,' saith he, 'are the pure in heart;' heart purity is the spring and life of all holiness; and why are such persons blessed; why, saith he, 'they shall see God;' he appropriates the promise of the eternal enjoyment of God, unto this qualification of purity of heart. So also it hath the promises of this life, and that in things temporal and spiritual. In things temporal we may take out from amongst many that especial instance given us by the psalmist; 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor.' Wisely to consider the poor in their distress, so as to relieve them according to our ability, is a great act and duty of holiness. He that doth this, saith the psalmist, he is a blessed man. Whence doth that blessedness arise, and wherein doth it consist? It doth so in a participation of those especial promises which God hath annexed unto this duty, even in this life; 'the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed on the earth, and thou wilt not deliver him into the hand of his enemies; the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, and thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness;' Psal. xli. 1—3. Many especial promises in the most important concerns of this life, are given unto the right discharge of this one duty. For godliness hath the promise of this life. And other instances might be multiplied unto the same purpose. It is so also with respect unto things spiritual. So the apostle Peter having repeated a long chain of graces, whose exercise he presenteth unto us, adds for an encouragement, 'If ye

do these things ye shall never fall;' 2 Pet. i. 10. The promise of permanency in obedience, with an absolute preservation from all such fallings into sin as are inconsistent with the covenant of grace, is affixed unto our diligence in holiness. And who knows not how the Scripture abounds in instances of this nature? That which we conclude from hence is, that together with the command of God requiring us to be holy, we should consider the promises wherewith it is accompanied (among other things) as an encouragement unto the cheerful performance of that obedience, which the command itself makes necessary.

Wherefore, the force of this argument is evident, and exposed unto all. God hath in this matter positively declared his will, interposing his sovereign authority commanding us to be holy; and that on the penalty of his utmost displeasure; and he hath therewithal given us redoubled assurance (as in a case wherein we are very apt to deceive ourselves), that be we else what we will, or can be, without sincere holiness he will neither own us, nor have any thing to do with us. Be our gifts, parts, abilities, places, dignities, usefulness in the world, profession, outward duties what they will, unless we are sincerely holy, which we may not be, and yet be eminent in all these things, we are not, we cannot, we shall not, be accepted with God.

And the Holy Ghost is careful to obviate a deceit in this matter, which he foresaw would be apt to put itself on the minds of men. For, whereas the foundation of our salvation in ourselves, and the hinge whereon the whole weight of it doth turn, is our faith; men might be apt to think, that if they have faith, it will be well enough with them although they are not holy. Therefore, because this plea and pretence of faith is great, and apt to impose on the minds of men, who would willingly retain their lusts with a hope and expectation of heaven, we are plainly told in the Scripture, that that faith which is without holiness, without works, without fruits, which can be so, or is possible that it should be so, is vain; not that faith which will save our souls, but equivocally so called, that may perish for ever with those in whom it is.

NECESSITY OF HOLINESS

FROM

GOD'S SENDING JESUS CHRIST.

CHAP. IV.

The necessity of holiness proved from the design of God in sending Jesus Christ, with the ends of his mediation.

We have yet other considerations and arguments to plead unto the same purpose with them foregoing: for one *principal* end of the design of God in *sending his Son* into the world, was to recover us into a *state of holiness*, which we had lost. 'For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;' 1 John iii. 8. The manifestation of the Son of God was his incarnation; 1 Tim. i. 16. in order to the work which he had to accomplish in our nature. And this was in general the 'destruction of the works of the devil.' And among these, the principal was, the infecting of our natures and persons with a principle of sin and enmity against God, which was the effect of his temptation. And this is not done but by the introduction of a principle of holiness and obedience. The image of God in us was defaced by sin. The renovation or restoration hereof, was one principal design of Christ in his coming. Unless this be done, there is no new world, no new creatures, no restoration of all things, no one end of the mediation of Christ fully accomplished. And whereas his great and ultimate design was to bring us unto the enjoyment of God, unto his eternal glory, this cannot be, before by grace and holiness we are made 'meet for that inheritance of the saints in light.' But we shall consider this matter a little more distinctly.

The exercise of the *mediation* of Christ, is confined unto the limits of his *threefold office*. Whatever he doth for the

church, he doth it as a priest, or as a king, or as a prophet. Now as these offices agree in all the general ends of his mediation, so they differ in their acts and immediate objects. For their acts, it is plain, sacerdotal, regal, and prophetical acts and duties, are of different natures, as the offices themselves are unto which they appertain. And for their objects; the proper immediate object of the priestly office is God himself, as is evident both from the nature of the office and its proper acts. For as to the nature of the office, 'every priest is taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining unto God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins;' Heb. v. 1. A priest is one who is appointed to deal with God, in the behalf of them for whom he executes his office. And the acts of the priestly office of Christ are two; oblation and intercession, of both which God is the immediate object. He offered himself unto God, and with him he makes intercession. But the immediate object of Christ's kingly and prophetical offices are men, or the church. As a priest, he acts with God in our name and on our behalf; as a king and prophet, he acts towards us in the name and authority of God.

This being premised, we may consider how each of these *offices* of Christ hath an influence into *holiness*, and makes it *necessary* unto us.

First, For the *priestly office* of Christ, all the proper acts of it do *immediately* respect God himself, as hath been declared. And, therefore, he doth not by any *sacerdotal act* immediately and efficiently work holiness in us. But the *effects* of these *priestly acts*, that is, his *oblation* and *intercession*, are of two sorts: 1. *Immediate*, such as respect God himself; as *atonement, reconciliation, satisfaction.* In these consist the *first* and fundamental end of the *mediation* of Christ. Without a supposition of these, all other things are rendered useless. We can neither be *sanctified* nor *saved* by him, unless sin be first *expiated* and God *atoned*. But they are not of our present consideration. 2. The *mediate effects* of Christ's *sacerdotal* acting respect us, and are also of two sorts. (1.) *Moral*, as our *justification* and *pardon* of *sin*. (2.) *Real*, in our *sanctification* and *holiness*. And hereunto, as God doth design them, so he effecteth holiness in all believers, by virtue of the oblation and intercession of Jesus Christ; wherefore, al-

though the immediate actings of that office respect God alone as their proper object, yet the virtue and efficacy of them extend themselves unto our sanctification and holiness.

Tit. ii. 14. 'He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' His giving himself for us, is the common expression of his offering himself a sacrifice to God as a priest; Eph. v. 2. And this he did not only that he might 'redeem us from iniquity,' from the guilt of our sins, and punishment due unto them, which are regarded in redemption, but also that he might purify us to himself, sanctify us, or make us holy and fruitful, or zealous of good works. His blood, as through the eternal Spirit he offered himself unto God, 'purgeth our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God;' Heb. ix. 14. There is a purging of sin, which consists in the legal expiation of it, in making atonement; Heb. i. 3. But the purging of a sinner, or of the conscience, is by real efficiency, in sanctification, which is declared to be one end of the oblation of Christ. So where he is said to 'wash us from our sins in his own blood,' namely, as shed and offered for us, Rev. i. 5. it is not only the expiation of guilt, but the purification of filth that is intended.

The way and manner how holiness is communicated unto us by virtue of the death and oblation of Christ, I have shewed before at large, and shall not, therefore, here again insist upon it. I shall only observe, that holiness being one especial end for which Christ 'gave himself for us,' or offered himself unto God for us, without a participation thereof, it is impossible that we should have the least evidence of an interest in his oblation as to any other end of it. And as for those who are never made holy, Christ never died or offered himself for them. I cannot understand what advantage it is unto religion, to affirm that the most of them for whom Christ died as a priest, or offered himself an oblation to God, shall have no benefit thereby as to grace or glory; and incomparably the most of them without any especial fault of their own, as never hearing of him. Neither can I find in the Scripture a double design of Christ, in giving himself for mankind; towards some, that they may be redeemed from all iniquity and purified to be his peculiar

ones; towards others, that they may yet be left under the guilt and power of their sins. And it evacuates the force of the motive unto the necessity of holiness from the consideration of the oblation of Christ, where men are taught that Christ offered himself a sacrifice for them who are never made holy. Wherefore, I say, no unholy person can have any certain evidence that he hath an interest in the oblation of Christ, seeing he gave himself to purify them for whom he was offered.

The intercession of Christ, which is his second sacerdotal act, hath also the same end, and is effectual to the same purpose: it is true, he doth intercede with God for the pardon of sin by virtue of his oblation; whence he is said to be our advocate with God, to comfort us in case of surprisals by sin; 1 John i. 1, 2. But this is not all he designeth therein; he intercedes also for grace and supplies of the Spirit, that we may be made and kept holy. See John xvii. 15. 17.

Secondly, As to the *prophetical office* of Christ, the *church* or *men* alone are its immediate *object*, and of all the acts and duties of it. He is therein God's legate and ambassador, his apostle and messenger unto us. Whatever he doth as a prophet, he doth it with us and towards us in the name of God. And there are two parts or works of Christ in this office, relating only to the doctrine he taught: 1. The *revelation* of God in his *name*, and *love*, in the mystery of his *grace* and *goodness* and *truth* by his *promises*, that we may *believe* in him. 2. The *revelation* of God in his *will* and *commands*, that we may *obey* him. For the first, wherein indeed his prophetical office was principally exercised, see John i. 18. iii. 2. xvii. 6. The revelation of the preceptive will of God made by Jesus Christ, may be considered two ways. (1.) As he was *peculiarly* sent to the *house of Israel*, the 'minister of the circumcision for the truth of the promises of God unto the fathers;' Rom. xv. 8. (2.) With respect unto the *whole church* of *all ages*.

(1.) The *first*, which took up much of his *personal ministry* in the flesh, consisted in the declarations, exposition, and vindication, that he gave unto the church of all *divine precepts* for obedience, which had been given before. God had from the beginning, and in especial manner at the promulgation

of the law on Sinai, and the ensuing expositions of it by the prophets, given excellent precepts for holiness and obedience; but the people unto whom they were given, being carnal, they were not able to bear the spiritual light and sense of them, which was, therefore, greatly veiled under the Old Testament. Not only the promises, but the precepts also of the law, were then but obscurely apprehended. Besides, the church being grown corrupted, they were solemn expositions of God's commands received amongst them, whose sole design was to accommodate them unto the lusts and sins of men, or to exempt men, if not totally, yet in many instances from an obligation unto obedience to them. Our blessed Saviour applies himself in the discharge of his prophetical office with respect unto the end of the command, which is our holy obedience, unto both these, in the declaration of its excellency and efficacy.

And, [1.] he declares the *inward spiritual nature* of the *law*, with its respect unto the most secret frames of our hearts and minds, with the least disorder or irregularity of our passions and affections. And then, [2.] he declares *the true sense of its commands*, their nature, signification, and extent, vindicating them from all the corrupt and false glosses which then passed current in the *church*, whereby there was an abatement made of their *efficacy*, and an *indulgence* granted unto the lusts of men. Thus they had by their traditional interpretation, restrained the sixth commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' unto actual murder; and the seventh, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' unto actual uncleanness: as some now would restrain the second commandment, unto the making of images and worshipping them, excluding the primary intent of the precept, restraining all means and manners of worship, unto divine institution. How in his doctrine he took off these corruptions, we may see Matt. v. 21, 22. 27, 28.

Thus he restored the law to its pristine crown, as the Jews have a tradition that it shall be done in the days of the Messiah. Herein did the Lord Christ place the beginning of his prophetical office and ministry; Matt. v. 6, 7. He opened, unveiled, explained, and vindicated, the preceptive part of the will of God before revealed, to the end that by a compliance therewith we should be holy. The full revela-

tion of the mind and will of God, in the perfection and spirituality of the command, was reserved for Christ in the discharge of his office. And he gave it unto us, that we might have a perfect and complete rule of holiness. This, therefore, was the immediate end of this work, or duty of the office of Christ. And where we answer it not, we reject that great prophet which God hath sent, to which excision is so severely threatened.

(2.) The *second* part of this office or of the discharge of it, with respect unto the *church of all ages*, which takes in the *ministry* of the apostles as divinely inspired by him, consisted in the *revelation of those duties of holiness*, which although they had a general *foundation* in the *law*, and the *equity* of them was therein established; yet could they never have been known to be duties in their *especial nature*, incumbent on us and necessary unto us, but by his teachings and instructions. Hence are they called old and new commandments in distinct senses; such are faith in God through himself, brotherly love, denial of ourselves in taking up the cross, doing good for evil, with some others of the same kind: and how a great part of evangelical holiness consists in these things, is known. Besides, he also teacheth us all those ordinances of worship, wherein our obedience unto him belongs unto our holiness also; whereby it is enlarged and promoted. This I say, is the nature and end of the prophetical office of Christ, wherein he acts towards us from God, and in his name, as to the declaration of the will of God in his commands. And it is our holiness which is his only end and design therein. So it is summarily represented, Tit. ii. 10—12.

There are three things considerable in the *doctrine of obedience* that Christ teacheth. [1.] That it reacheth the *heart* itself, with all its *inmost* and *secret actings*, and that in the *first* place. The practice of *most* goes no farther but unto *outward acts;* the teachings of many go no farther, or at *best* unto the *moderation of affections*. But he, in the *first* place, requires the *renovation* of our *whole souls*, in all their faculties, motions, and actings, into the *image* of God; 1 John iii. 1. Eph. iv. 23—25. [2.] It is *extensive*. There is nothing in any kind pleasing to *God*, conformable to his *mind*, or compliant with his *will*, but he *requires* it; nothing *crooked*, or *perverse*, or *dis-*

pleasing to God, but it is *forbidden* by him. It is, therefore, a *perfect rule* of holiness and obedience. [3.] *Clearness, perspicuity,* and *evidence* of divine truth and authority in all.

[1.] Hereby, I say, the *doctrine* of Christ for *universal obedience,* in all the duties of it, become to be *absolute,* every way *complete* and *perfect.* And it is a notable effect of the atheistical pride of men, that pretending to design obedience (at least in moral duties) unto God, they betake themselves unto other rules and directions, as either more plain, or full, or efficacious, than those of the gospel, which are the teachings of Christ himself, as the great prophet and apostle sent of God, to instruct us in our duty. Some go to the light of nature, and the use of right reason, that is, their own, as their guide; and some add the additional documents of the philosophers: they think a saying of Epictetus, or Seneca, or Arrianus, being wittily suited to their fancies and affections, to have more life and power in it than any precepts of the gospel. The reason why these things are more pleasing unto them, than the commands and instructions of Christ, is, because, proceeding from the spring of natural light, they are suited to the workings of natural fancy and understanding; but those of Christ, proceeding from the fountain of eternal spiritual light, are not comprehended in their beauty and excellency, without a principle of the same light in us, guiding our understandings, and influencing our affections. Hence take any precept, general or particular, about moral duties, that is materially the same, in the writing of philosophers, and in the doctrine of the gospel, not a few prefer it as delivered in the first way, before the latter. Such a contempt have men risen unto, of Jesus Christ the wisdom of God, and the great prophet of the church. When he entered upon his office, 'the voice came from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, hear him:' this succeeded into the room of all those terrible appearances, and dreadful preparations which God made use of in the giving of the law. For he gave the law by the ministry of angels, who being mere creatures, he manifested the dread of his own presence among them, to give authority unto their ministrations. But when he came to reveal his will under the gospel, it being to be done by him in 'whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' and who was intrusted himself with all divine

power, he did no more but indigitate or declare which was the person, and give us a command in general to hear him. And this he did with respect unto what he had fixed before as a fundamental ordinance of heaven, namely, that 'when he should raise up and send the great prophet of the church,' whosoever would not hear him should be cut off from the people. A compliance, therefore, with this command, in hearing the voice of Christ, is the foundation of all holiness and gospel obedience. And if men will be moved neither with the wisdom, nor authority, nor goodness of God, in giving us this command and direction for our good, nor with the consideration of the endowments and faithfulness of Jesus Christ the Son of God, in the discharge of his prophetical office, nor from the remembrance that it is he, and not Epictetus, or Seneca, or Plato, to whom at the last day they must give their account, so as to take him alone for their guide in all obedience unto God, and duty among themselves; they will find, when it is too late, that they have been mistaken in their choice.

Let us suppose, if you please, at present, for the sake of them who would have it so, that all our obedience consists in morality or the duties of it, which is the opinion of (as one well calls them) our modern Heathens; from whence or whom shall we learn it, or to whom shall we go for teaching and instruction about it? Certainly where the instruction or system of precepts is most plain, full, perfect, and free from mistakes; where the manner of teaching is most powerful and efficacious, and where the authority of the teacher is greatest and most unquestionable, there we ought to apply ourselves to learn and be guided. In all these respects we may say of Christ, as Job said of God, 'Who teacheth like him?' Job xxxvi. 22. Then probably shall we be taught of God, when we are taught by him. The commands and precepts of duties themselves which are given us by the light of nature, however improved by the wits and reasons of contemplative men, are many ways defective.

For, 1st. The *utmost imaginations* of men, never reached unto that wherein the *life* and *soul* of *holiness* doth consist, namely, the *renovation* of our *lapsed natures* into the *image* and *likeness* of God. Without this, whatever precepts are given about the moderation of affections and duties of mo-

ral holiness, they are lifeless, and will prove useless. And hence it is, that by all those documents which were given by philosophers of old, the nature of no one individual person was ever renewed, what change soever was wrought on their conversation. But that this is plainly and directly required in the doctrine of obedience taught by Jesus Christ as the great prophet of the church, I have sufficiently proved in this whole discourse.

2ndly. Very few of the *precepts* of it are *certain*, so as that we may take them for an undoubted and infallible *rule*. There are some general commands, I acknowledge, so clear in the light of nature, as that no question can be made, but that what is required in them is our duty to perform: such are they, that God is to be loved, that others are not to be injured, that every one's right is to rendered unto him, whereunto all reasonable creatures do assent at their first proposal. And where any are found to live in an open neglect, or seem to be ignorant, of them, their degeneracy into bestiality is open, and their sentiments not at all to be regarded. But go a little farther, and you will find all the great moralists at endless uncertain disputes about the nature of virtue in general, about the offices and duties of it, about the rule and measures of their practice. In these disputes did most of them consume their lives, without any great endeavours to express their own notions in their conversations.

And from the same reason, I suppose, in part it is, that our present moralists seems to care for nothing but the name; virtue itself is grown to be a strange and uncouth thing. But what is commanded us by Jesus Christ, there is no room for the least hesitation whether it be an infallible rule for us to attend unto or no. Every precept of his about the meanest duty, is equally certain and infallibly declarative of the nature and necessity of that duty, as those of the greatest, and that have most evidence from the light of nature If once it appears that Christ requires any thing of us by his word, that he hath taught us any thing as the prophet of the church, there is no doubt remains with us, whether it be our duty or no.

3rdly. The whole rule of duties given by the most improved light of nature, setting aside those that are purely

evangelical, which some despise, is obscure and partial. There are sundry moral duties which I instanced in before, which the light of nature, as it remains in the lapsed depraved condition of it, never extended itself to the discovery of. And this obscurity is evident from the differences that are about its precepts and directions. But now as the revelation made by Christ, and his commands therein, is commensurate unto universal obedience, and gives bounds unto it, so that there is no duty of it but what he hath commanded, and it is sufficient to discharge the most specious pleas and pretences of any thing to be a duty towards God or man, by shewing that it is not required by him; so his commands and directions are plain and evidently perspicuous. I dare challenge the greatest and most learned moralists in the world, to give an instance of any one duty of morality, confirmed by the rules and directions of the highest and most contemplative moralist, that I will not shew and evince, that is more plainly and clearly required by the Lord Christ in the gospel, and pressed on us by far more effectual motives than any they are acquainted withal. It is, therefore, the highest folly as well as wickedness, for men to design, plead, or pretend, the learning duties of obedience from others rather than from Christ the prophet of the church.

[2.] The *manner* of teaching as to *power* and *efficacy*, is also considerable unto this end. And concerning this also, we may say, Who teacheth like him? There was that eminency in his personal ministry whilst he was on the earth, as filled all men with admiration. Hence it is said, that 'he taught with authority, and not as the scribes;' Matt. vii. 29. and another while 'they wondered at the gracious words which he uttered;' Luke iv. 22. And the very officers that were sent to apprehend him for preaching, came away astonished, saying, 'Never man spake like this man;' John vii. 46. It is true, it was not the design of God, that multitudes of that hardened generation should be converted by his personal ministry; John xii. 38—40. as having another to fulfil in them, by them, and upon them; yet it is evident from the gospel, that there was *θεῖον τί*, a divine power and glory, accompanying his ministerial instructions. Yet this is not that which I intend, but his continued and present

teaching of the church by his word and Spirit. He gives that power and efficacy unto it, as that by its effects every day it demonstrates itself to be from God, being accompanied with the evidence and demonstration of a spiritual power put forth in it. This the experiences, consciences, and lives of multitudes, bear witness unto continually. They do and will to eternity attest what power his word hath had to enlighten their minds, to subdue their lusts, to change and renew their hearts, to relieve and comfort them in their temptations and distresses, with the like effects of grace and power.

What is in the manner of teaching by the greatest moralist; and what are the effects of it? Enticing words, smoothness and elegancy of speech, composed into snares for the affections, and delight unto the fancy, are the grace, ornament, and life of the way or manner of their teaching. And hereof, evanid satisfaction, temporary resolutions for a kind of compliance with the things spoken, with, it may be, some few perishing endeavours after some change of life, are the best effects of all such discourses. And so easy and gentle is their operation on the minds of men, that commonly they are delighted in by the most profligate and obstinate sinners, as is the preaching of them who act in the same spirit and from the same principles.

[3.] Whereas the last thing considerable in those whose *instructions* we should choose to give up ourselves unto, is their *authority*, that must be left without farther plea to the consciences of all men, whether they have the highest esteem of the *authority* of *Christ* the Son of God, or of those others whom they do admire; and let them freely take their choice, so they will ingenuously acknowledge what they do.

Whereas, therefore, the great end of the prophetical office of Christ, in the revelation he made of the will of God in the Scriptures, in his personal ministry, in the dispensation of his word and Spirit continued in the church, is our holiness and obedience unto God, I could not but remark upon the atheism, pride, and folly of those modern Heathens, who really or in pretence, betake themselves to the light of nature and philosophical maxims, for their guidance and direction, rather than to him who is designed of God to be the great

teacher of the church. I deny not, but that in the ancient moralists there are found many excellent documents concerning virtue and vice; but yet, having been, it may be, more conversant in their writings than most of those who pretend so highly unto their veneration, I fear not to affirm, that as their sayings may be of use for illustration of the truth which is infallibly learned another way, so take them alone, they will sooner delight the minds and fancies of men, than benefit or profit them as to the true ends of morality or virtue.

Thirdly, This also is one great *end* of the *kingly power* of *Christ*. For as such doth he subdue our enemies, and preserve our souls from ruin. And those are our adversaries, which fight against our spiritual condition and safety; such principally are our lusts, our sins, and our temptations, wherewith they are accompanied. These doth our Lord Christ subdue by his kingly power, quickening and strengthening in us by his aids and supplies of grace, all principles of holy obedience. In brief, the work of Christ as a king may be reduced unto these heads. 1. To make his subjects *free*. 2. To preserve them in *safety*, delivering their souls from deceit and violence. 3. In giving them *prosperity*, and increasing their wealth. 4. In establishing assured *peace* for them. 5. In giving them *love* among themselves. 6. In placing the *interest* and *welfare* of his kingdom in all their *affections*. 7. In eternally *rewarding* their *obedience*. And all these he doth principally by working grace and holiness in them, as might be easily demonstrated. I suppose none question but that the principal work of Christ towards us as our head and king, is in making and preserving of us holy. I shall not, therefore, farther insist thereon.

It remains that we improve these considerations, unto the confirmation of our present argument concerning the necessity of holiness.

And, *first*, it is hence evident how *vain* and *fond* a thing it is, for any persons continuing in an *unholy condition*, to imagine, that they have any *interest* in Christ, or shall have any *benefit* by him. This is the great deceit whereby Satan, that enemy of the common salvation, hath ruined the generality of mankind who profess the Christian religion. The gospel openly declares a way of life and salvation by Jesus Christ.

This is thus far admitted by all who are called Christians, that they will allow of no other way for the same end, unto competition with it. For I speak not of them who being profligate and hardened in sins, are regardless of all future concernments; but I intend only such as in general have a desire to escape the damnation of hell, and to attain immortality and glory. And this they do at least profess to do by Jesus Christ, as supposing that the things to this purpose mentioned in the gospel, do belong unto them as well as unto others, because they also are Christians. But they consider not that there are certain ways and means, whereby the virtue and benefit of all that the Lord Christ hath done for us, are conveyed to the souls of men, whereby they are made partakers of them. Without these we have no concernment in what Christ hath done or declared in the gospel. If we expect to be saved by Christ, it must be by what he doth and hath done for us, as a priest, a prophet, and a king: but one of the principal ends of what he doth in all these, is to make us holy; and if these be not effected in us, we can have no eternal benefit by any thing that Christ hath done or continueth to do as the mediator of the church.

Hence the miserable condition of the generality of those who are called Christians, who live in sin, and yet hope to be saved by the gospel, is greatly to be bewailed. They contract to themselves the guilt of the two greatest evils that any reasonable creatures are liable unto in this world. For, 1. they wofully deceive and ruin their own souls. Their whole profession of the gospel is but a crying, Peace, peace, when sudden destruction lies at the door. They deny the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. They are brought and vindicated into the knowledge and profession of the truth, but in their works they deny him whom in words they own, 'whose damnation sleepeth not.' For men to live in covetousness, sensuality, pride, ambition, pleasures, hatred of the power of godliness, and yet to hope for salvation by the gospel, is the most infallible way to hasten and secure their own eternal ruin. And, 2. they cast the greatest dishonour on Christ, and the gospel, that any persons are capable of casting on them. Those by whom the Lord Christ is rejected as a seducer, and the gospel as a fable, do not more (I may say, not so much) disho-

nour the one and the other, as those do, who professing to own them both, yet continue to live and walk in an unholy condition. For, as to the open enemies of Christ, they are judged and condemned already, and none have occasion to think the worse of him or the gospel for their opposition unto them: but for those others who profess to own them, they endeavour to represent the Lord Christ as a minister of sin, as one who hath procured indulgence unto men to live in their lusts and rebellion against God; and the gospel as a doctrine of licentiousness and wickedness. What else can any one learn from them concerning the one or the other? The whole language of their profession is, that Christ is such a Saviour, and the gospel such a law and rule, as that men loving sin, and living in sin, may be saved by them. This is that which hath reflected all kind of dishonour on Christian religion, and put a stop unto its progress in the world. These are they of whom our apostle makes his bitter complaint, Phil. iii. 18, 19. 'Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.' How many that are called Christians doth this character suit in these days? Whatever they think of themselves, they are 'enemies of the cross of Christ,' and do trample under their feet the 'blood of the covenant.'

Secondly, Let *more serious* professors be *most serious* in this *matter*. The apostle having given assurance of the certain salvation of all true believers, from the immutable purpose of God, presently adds, 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity;' 2 Tim. ii. 19. plainly intimating, that without holiness, without a universal departure from iniquity, we cannot have the least evidence that we are interested in that assured condition. You name the name of Christ, profess an interest in him, and expect salvation by him; which way will you apply yourselves unto him? from which of his offices do you expect advantage? Is it from his sacerdotal? Hath his blood purged your consciences from dead works, that you should serve the living God? Are you cleansed, and sanctified, and made holy thereby? Are you redeemed out of the world by it, and from your vain conver-

sation therein, after the customs and traditions of men? Are you by it dedicated unto God, and made his peculiar ones? If you find not these effects of the blood-shedding of Christ in and upon your souls and consciences, in vain will you expect those other of atonement, peace, and reconciliation with God; of mercy, pardon, justification, and salvation, which you look for. The priestly office of Christ hath its whole effect towards all on whom it hath any effects. Despisers of its fruits in holiness, shall never have the least interest in its fruits in righteousness.

Is it from his actings as the great prophet of the church, that you expect help and relief? Have you effectually learned of him 'to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts,' to live righteously, and soberly, and godly in this present world? Hath he taught you to be humble, to be meek, to be patient, to hate the 'garment spotted with the flesh!' Hath he instructed you unto sincerity in all your ways, dealings, and whole conversations among men? Above all, hath he taught you, have you learned of him, to purify and cleanse your hearts by faith, to subdue your inward spiritual and fleshly lusts, to endeavour after a universal conformity unto his image and likeness? Do you find his doctrine effectual unto these ends, and are your hearts and minds cast into the mould of it? If it be so, your interest in him by his prophetical office, is secured unto you. But if you say, you hear his voice in his word read and preached, that you have learned many mysteries, and have attained much light or knowledge thereby, at least you know the substance of the doctrine he hath taught, so as that you can discourse of it, yea, and that you do many things or perform many duties according unto it; but cannot say, that the effects before inquired after are wrought in you by his word and Spirit, you lose the second expectation of an interest in Christ as mediator, or any advantage thereby.

Will you betake yourselves to the kingly office of Christ, and have you expectations on him by virtue thereof? You may do well to examine, how he ruleth in you and over you. Hath he subdued your lusts, those enemies of his kingdom, which fight against your souls? Hath he strengthened, aided, supported, assisted you by his grace, unto all holy obedience? And have you given up yourselves to be ruled by his word and Spirit, to obey him in all things, and to intrust all

your temporal and eternal concernments unto his care, faithfulness, and power? If it be so, you have cause to rejoice, as those who have an assured concern in the blessed things of his kingdom. But if your proud rebellious lusts do yet bear sway in you, if sin have dominion over you, if you continue to fulfil the lusts of the mind, and of the flesh; if you walk after the fashions of this world, and not as obedient subjects of that kingdom of his which is not of this world: deceive not yourselves any longer, Christ will be of no advantage unto you. In these things lie the sum of our present argument. If the Lord Christ act no otherwise for our good, but in and by his blessed offices of priest, prophet, and king; and if the immediate effect of the grace of Christ acting in all these offices towards us, be our holiness and sanctification, those in whom that effect is not wrought and produced, have neither ground nor reason to promise themselves an interest in Christ, or any advantage by his mediation. For men to name the 'name of Christ,' to profess themselves Christians, or his disciples, to avow an expectation of mercy, pardon, life, and salvation by him, and in the mean time to be in themselves worldly, proud, ambitious, envious, revengeful, haters of good men, covetous, living in divers lusts and pleasures, is a scandal and shame unto Christian religion, and unavoidably destructive to their own souls.

NECESSITY OF HOLINESS

FROM

OUR CONDITION IN THIS WORLD.

CHAP. V.

Necessity of holiness farther argued, from our own state and condition in this world; with what is required of us with respect unto our giving glory to Jesus Christ.

ANOTHER argument for the *necessity of holiness,* may be taken from the consideration of *ourselves,* and our *present state* and *condition.* For it is hereby alone that the vicious distemper of our natures is or can be cured. That our nature is fearfully and universally depraved by the entrance of sin, I have before declared and sufficiently confirmed. And I do not now consider it as to the disability of living unto God, or enmity unto him which is come upon us thereby, nor yet as to the future punishment which it renders us obnoxious unto: but it is the present misery that is upon us by it, unless it be cured, which I intend. For the mind of man being possessed with darkness, vanity, folly, and instability; the will under the power of spiritual death, stubborn and obstinate, and all the affections carnal, sensual, and selfish, the whole soul being hurried off from God, and so out of its way, is perpetually filled with confusion and perplexing disorder. It is not unlike that description which Job gives of the grave, 'A land of darkness and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness;' chap. x. 21, 22. When Solomon set himself to search out the causes of all the vanity and vexation that is in the world, of all the troubles that the life of man is filled withal; he affirms that this was the sum of his discovery, 'God made men upright, butthey have found out many inventions;' Eccles. vii. 29. that is, cast themselves into endless entanglements and con-

fusions. What is sin in its guilt, is punishment in its power, yea, the greatest that men are liable unto in this world. Hence God for the guilt of some sins, penally gives many up to the power of others; Rom. i. 24. 26. 28. 2 Thess. ii. 11. And this he doth, not only to secure and aggravate their condemnation at the last day, but to give them in this world a recompense of their folly in themselves. For there is no greater misery nor slavery, than to be under the power of sin.

This proves the original depravation of our nature, the whole soul filled with darkness, disorder, and confusion, being brought under the power of various lusts and passions, captivating the mind and will unto their interests, in the vilest drudgeries of servitude and bondage. No sooner doth the mind begin to act any thing suitably unto the small remainders of light in it, but it is immediately controlled by impetuous lusts and affections, which darken its directions, and silence its commands. Hence is the common saying, not so common as what is signified by it;

> ———Video meliora proboque,
> Deteriora sequor———

Hence the whole soul is filled with fierce contradictions and conflicts. Vanity, instability, folly, sensual irrational appetites, inordinate desires, self-disquieting and torturing passions, act continually in our depraved natures. See the account hereof, Rom. iii. 10—18. How full is the world of disorder, confusion, oppression, rapine, uncleanness, violence, and the like dreadful miseries? Alas! they are but a weak and imperfect representation of the evils that are in the minds of men by nature. For as they all proceed from thence, as our Saviour declares, Matt. xv. 18, 19. so the thousandth part of what is conceived therein, is never brought forth and acted. 'From whence come wars and fightings among you, come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? ye lust and have not, ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet you have not;' James iv. 1, 2. All evils proceed from the impetuous lusts of the minds of men, which when they are acted unto the utmost, are as unsatisfied as they were at their first setting out. Hence the prophet tells us, that wicked men, under the power and disorder of depraved nature, are like a 'trou-

bled sea that cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and dirt;' and 'have no peace;' Isa. lvii. 20, 21. The heart is in continual motion; is restless in its figments and imaginations, as the waters of the sea when it is stormy and troubled; and they are all evil, 'only evil continually;' Gen. vi. 5. Herein doth it cast up 'mire and dirt.' And those who seem to have the greatest advantages above others in power and opportunity to give satisfaction unto their lusts, do but increase their own disquietness and miseries; Psal. lxix. 14. For as these things are evil in themselves, and unto others, so they are penal unto those in whom they are, especially in whom they abound and reign. And if their breasts were opened, it would appear, by the confusion and horror they live in, that they are on the very confines of hell.

Hence is the life of man full of vanity, trouble, disappointments, vexations, and endless self-dissatisfactions, which those who were wise among the Heathens, saw, complained of, and attempted in vain reliefs against. All these things proceed from the depravation of our natures, and the disorder that is come upon us by sin. And as, if they are not cured and healed, they will assuredly issue in everlasting misery, so they are woful and calamitous at present. True peace, rest, and tranquillity of mind are strangers unto such souls. Alas! what are the perishing profits, pleasures, and satisfactions by them, which this world can afford? How unable is the mind of man to find out rest and peace in them or from them? They quickly satiate and suffocate in their enjoyment, and become to have no relish in their varieties, which only heightens present vanity, and treasures up provision for future vexation. We have, therefore, no greater interest in the world, than to inquire how this disorder may be cured, and a stop put to this fountain of all abominations. What we intend, will be cleared in the ensuing observations.

1. It is true, that some are *naturally* of a more *sedate* and *quiet temper* and *disposition* than others are. They fall not into such outrages and excesses of outward sins as others do; nay, their minds are not capable of such turbulent passions and affections as the most are possessed withal. These comparatively are peaceable, and useful to their relations and others. But yet their minds and hearts are full of dark-

ness and disorder. For so it is with all by nature (as we have proved), who have not an almighty effectual cure wrought upon them. And the less troublesome waves they have on the surface, the more mire and dirt oft-times they have at the bottom.

2. *Education, convictions, afflictions, illuminations,* hope of a *righteousness* of their own, love of *reputation,* engagements into the *society* of *good men, resolutions* for secular ends, with other means of the like kind, do often put great restraints upon the *actings* and *ebullitions* of the evil imaginations and turbulent affections of the minds of men; yea, the *frame* of the *mind* and the *course* of the *life* may be much changed by them; *how, wherein,* and *how far,* is not our present business to declare.

3. Notwithstanding all that may be effected by these *means,* or any other of like nature, the *disease* is *uncured,* the soul continues still in its *disorder,* and in all inward confusions. For our original order, harmony, and rectitude, consisted in the powers and inclinations of our minds, wills, and affections, unto regular actings towards God as our end and reward. Hence proceeded all that order and peace which was in all their faculties and their actings. Whilst we continued in due order towards God, it was impossible that we should be otherwise in ourselves: but being by sin fallen off from God, having lost our conformity and likeness unto him, we fell into all the confusion and disorder before described. Wherefore,

4. The only *cure* and *remedy* of this evil condition, is by *holiness.* For it must be and can be no otherwise but by the renovation of the image of God in us; for from the loss hereof doth all the evil mentioned spring and arise. By this are our souls in some measure restored unto their primitive order and rectitude. And without this, attempts for inward peace, real tranquillity of mind, with due order in our affections, will be in vain attempted. It is the holy soul, the sanctified mind alone, that is composed into an orderly tendency towards the enjoyment of God. That which we aim at is, what we are directed unto by our apostle; Eph. iv. 22—24. Our deliverance from the power of corrupt and deceitful lusts, which are the spring and cause of all the confusion mentioned, is by the renovation of the image of God in us, and no otherwise. And hence, unto all persons not in love with their

lusts and ruin, ariseth a cogent argument and motive unto holiness. But sundry things may be objected hereunto; as,

First, That we do admit and maintain, that in all *sanctified persons* there are yet certain *remainders* of our *original depravation* and disorder; that *sin* still abideth in *believers*; yea, that it works *powerfully* and effectually in them, leading them *captive* unto the *law of sin*. Hence ensue great and mighty wars and conflicts in the souls of regenerate persons, that are truly sanctified. Herein they suffer so far, as to groan, complain, and cry out for deliverance. 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary.' Wherefore, it doth not appear, that this holiness doth so heal, and cure the sinful distempers of our minds. On the other side, men supposed as yet under the power of sin, who have not that grace and holiness in the renovation of the image of God which is pleaded for, seem to have more peace and quietness in their minds. They have not that inward conflict which others complain of, nor those groans for deliverance. Yea, they find satisfaction in their lusts and pleasures, relieving themselves by them against any thing that occasioneth their trouble.

Ans. 1. For that *peace* and *order* which is pretended to be in the minds of men under the *power* of *sin*, and not *sanctified*, it is like that which is in *hell*, and the kingdom of darkness. Satan is not divided against himself, nor is there such a confusion and disorder in his kingdom as to destroy it; but it hath a consistency from the common end of all that is in it, which is an opposition unto God and all that is good. Such a peace and order there may be in an unsanctified mind. There being no active principle in it for God and that which is spiritually good, all works one way, and all its troubled streams have the same course. But yet they continually cast up mire and dirt. There is only that peace in such minds which the 'strong man armed,' that is Satan, keeps his goods in, until a stronger than he comes to bind him. And if any one think that peace and order to be sufficient for him, wherein his mind in all its faculties acts uniformly against God, or for self, sin, and the world, without any opposition or contradiction, he may find as much in hell when he comes there.

2. There is a difference between a *confusion* and a *re-*

bellion. Where a confusion is in a state, all rule or government is dissolved, and every thing is let loose unto the utmost disorder and evil. But where the rule is firm and stable, there may be rebellions that may give some parts and places disturbances and damage, but yet the whole state is not disordered thereby. So is it in the condition of a sanctified soul on account of the remainders of sin; there may be rebellion in it, but there is no confusion. Grace keeps the rule in the mind and heart firm and stable, so that there is peace and assurance unto the whole state of the person, though lusts and corruptions will be rebelling and warring against it. The divine order, therefore, of the soul consisting in the rule of grace, subordinating all to God in Christ, is never overthrown by the rebellion of sin at any time, be it never so vigorous or prevalent. But in the state of unsanctified persons, though there be no rebellion, yet is there nothing but confusion. Sin hath the rule and dominion in them; and however men may be pleased with it for a season, yet is it nothing but perfect disorder, because it is a continual opposition to God. It is a tyranny that overthrows all law, and rule, and order, with respect unto our last and chiefest end.

3. The soul of a *believer* hath that *satisfaction* in this *conflict,* as that its *peace* is not ordinarily *disturbed,* and is never quite *overthrown* by it. Such a person knows sin to be his enemy, knows its design, with the aids and assistances which are prepared for him against its deceit and violence; and considering the nature and end of this contest, is satisfied with it. Yea, the greatest hardships that sin can reduce a believer unto, do but put him to the exercise of those graces and duties wherein he receiveth great spiritual satisfaction. Such are repentance, humiliation, godly sorrow, self-abasement, and abhorrency, with fervent outcries for deliverance. Now, although these things seem to have that which is grievous and dolorous prevailing in them, yet the graces of the Spirit of God being acted in them, they are so suited unto the nature of the new creature and so belong unto the spiritual order of the soul, that it finds secret satisfaction in them all. But the trouble others meet withal in their own hearts and minds on the account of sin, is from the severe reflections of their consciences only, and they re-

ceive them no otherwise but as certain presages and predictions of future and eternal misery.

4. A *sanctified person* is secured of *success* in this *conflict*, which keeps blessed *peace* and *order* in his soul during its continuance. There is a twofold *success* against the *rebellious* actings of the *remainders* of *indwelling sin*. (1.) In *particular instances:* (2.) In the *whole cause*. And in both these have we sufficient assurance of *success*, if we be not wanting unto ourselves.

(1.) For suppose the contest be considered with respect unto any *particular lust* and *corruption*, and that in conjunction with some powerful *temptation*, we have sufficient and blessed assurance that *abiding* in the diligent use of the *ways* and *means* assigned unto us, and the improvement of the *assistance* provided in the *covenant* of *grace*, we shall not so fail of actual *success*, as that '*lust should conceive, bring forth, and finish sin;*' 2 Cor. ii. 12. But if we be wanting unto ourselves, negligent in our known duties and principal concerns, it is no wonder if we are sometimes cast into disorder, and foiled by the powers of sin. But,

(2.) As to the *general success* in the *whole cause*, namely, that *sin* shall not *utterly deface* the *image* of God in us, nor *absolutely* or *finally ruin* our *souls*, which is its end and tendency, we have the *covenant faithfulness* of God (which will not fail us) for our *security;* Rom. vi. 12. Wherefore, notwithstanding this opposition and all that is ascribed unto it, there is peace and order preserved by the power of holiness in a sanctified mind and soul.

Secondly, But it will be farther objected, That many professors who pretend highly unto sanctification and holiness, and whom you judge to be partakers of them, are yet peevish, froward, morose, unquiet in their minds, among their relations, and in the world; yea, much outward vanity and disorder (which you make tokens of the internal confusion of the minds of men, and the *power* of *sin*) do either proceed from them, or are carried on by them. And where then is the advantage pretended, that should render holiness so indispensably necessary unto us?

Ans. If there are any such, the more *shame* for them, and they must bear their own *judgment*. These things are *diametrically* opposite to the work of holiness, and the 'fruits

of the Spirit;' Gal. v. 22. And, therefore, I say, 1. That many, it may be, are esteemed *holy* and *sanctified*, who indeed are not so. Though I will judge no man in particular, yet I had rather pass this judgment on any man, that he hath no grace, than that, on the other hand, grace doth not change our natures, and renew the image of God in us. 2. Many who are really holy, may have the double disadvantage; first, to be under such circumstances as will frequently draw out their natural infirmities, and then to have them greatened and heightened in the apprehension of them with whom they have to do, which was actually the case of David all his days, and of Hannah; 1 Sam. i. 6, 7. I would be far from giving countenance unto the sinful distempers of any; but yet I doubt not, but that the infirmities of many are represented, by envy and hatred of profession, unto an undeserved disadvantage. 3. Wherever there is the seed of grace and holiness, there an entrance is made on the cure of all these sinful distempers; yea, not only of the corrupt lusts of the flesh, that are absolutely evil and vicious in their whole nature; but even of those natural infirmities and distempers of peevishness, moroseness, inclination to anger and passion, unsteadiness in resolution, which lust is apt to possess, and use unto evil and disorderly ends. And I am pressing the necessity of holiness, that is, of the increase and growth of it, that this work may be carried on to perfection, and that so through the power of the grace of the gospel, that great promise may be accomplished which is recorded, Isa. xi. 6—9. And, as when a wandering juggling impostor, who pretended to judge of men's lives and manners by their physiognomy, beholding Socrates, pronounced him from his countenance a person of a flagitious sensual life, the people derided his folly, who knew his sober virtuous conversation; but Socrates excused him, affirming that such he had been, had he not bridled his nature by philosophy; how much more truly may it be said of multitudes, that they had been eminent in nothing but untoward distempers of mind, had not their souls been rectified and cured by the power of grace and holiness.

I find there is no end of arguments that offer their service to the purpose in hand; I shall, therefore, wave many, and those of great importance, attended with an unavoidable

cogency, and shut up this discourse with one which must not be omitted. In our holiness consists the principal part of that revenue of glory and honour which the Lord Christ requireth and expecteth from his disciples in this world. That he doth require this indispensably of us, is, I suppose, out of question amongst us; although the most who are called Christians, live as if they had no other design but to cast all obloquies, reproach, and shame, on him and his doctrine. But, if we are indeed his disciples, he hath bought us with a price, and we are not our own, but his, and that to glorify him in soul and body, because they are his; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. He died for us, that we should not live unto ourselves, but unto him that so died for us, and by virtue of whose death we live; Rom. xiv. 7—9. 'He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;' Tit. ii. 14. But we need not to insist hereon. To deny that we ought to glorify and honour Christ in the world, is to renounce him and the gospel. The sole inquiry is, How we may do so, and what he requireth of us to that purpose?

Now the sum of all that the Lord Christ expects from us in this world, may be reduced unto these two heads: 1. That we should *live holily* to him. 2. That we should *suffer patiently* for him. And in these things alone is he glorified by us. The first he expecteth at all times, and in all things; the latter, on particular occasions, as we are called by him thereunto. Where these things are, where this revenue of glory is paid in and returned unto him, he repents not of his purchase, nor of the invaluable price he hath paid for us; yea, says, 'The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, I have a goodly heritage;' which are the words of Christ concerning the church, which is his lot, and the 'portion of his inheritance;' Psal. xvi. 6. Now, amongst many others, we shall consider but one way, whereby we glorify the Lord Christ by our holy obedience, and whence also it will appear how much we dishonour and reproach him when we come short thereof.

The Lord Christ coming into the world as the mediator between God and man, wrought and accomplished a mighty work amongst us. And what he did may be referred to three heads. 1. The *life* which he *led;* 2. The *doctrine* which he

taught: and, 3. The *death* which he *underwent.* Concerning all these, there ever was a great contest in the world, and it is yet continued. And on the part of the world, it is managed under a double appearance; for some openly have traduced his life as unholy, his doctrine as foolish, and his death as justly deserved; which was the sense of the Pagan world, and the apostate Judaical church of old, as it is of many at this day. Others allow them to pass with some approbation, pretending to own what is taught in the gospel concerning them, but, in fact and practice, deny any such power and efficacy in them as is pretended, and without which, they are of no virtue, which is the way of carnal gospellers, and all idolatrous, superstitious worshippers among Christians. And of late there is risen up amongst us a generation, who esteem all that is spoken concerning him to be a mere fable. In opposition hereunto, the Lord Christ calls all his true disciples, to bear witness and testimony unto the holiness of his life, the wisdom and purity of his doctrine, the efficacy of his death to expiate sin, to make atonement and peace with God, with the power of his whole mediation to renew the image of God in us, to restore us into his favour, and to bring us unto the enjoyment of him. This he calls all his disciples to avow unto and express in the world, and by their so doing is he glorified (and no otherwise) in a peculiar manner. A testimony is to be given unto and against the world, that his life was most holy, his doctrine most heavenly and pure, his death most precious and efficacious, and consequently, that he was sent of God unto his great work, and was accepted of him therein; now all this is no otherwise done, but by obedience unto him in holiness as it is visible and fruitful. For,

1. We are obliged to profess, that the *life* of *Christ* is our *example.* This, in the first place, are we called unto, and every Christian doth virtually make that profession. No man takes that holy name upon him, but the first thing he signifies thereby, is that he makes the life of Christ his pattern, which it is his duty to express in his own. And he who takes up Christianity on any other terms, doth wofully deceive his own soul. How is it then that we may yield a revenue of glory herein? How may we bear testimony unto the holiness of his life, against the blasphemies of the world,

and the unbelief of the most, who have no regard thereunto? Can this be any otherwise done but by holiness of heart and life, by conformity to God in our souls, and living unto God in fruitful obedience? Can men devise a more effectual expedient to cast reproach upon him, than to live in sin, to follow divers lusts and pleasures, to prefer the world and present things before eternity, and in the meantime to profess, that the life of Christ is their example, as all unholy professors and Christians do? Is not this to bear witness with the world against him, that indeed his life was unholy? Surely it is high time for such persons to leave the name of Christians, or the life of sin. It is, therefore, alone in conformity to him in the holiness we are pressing after, that we can give him any glory on the account of his life being our example.

2. We can give him no *glory*, unless we bear testimony unto his *doctrine*, that it is *holy, heavenly*, filled with divine *wisdom* and *grace*, as we make it our *rule*. And there is no other way whereby this may be done, but by holy obedience, expressing the nature, end, and usefulness of it; Tit. ii. 11, 12. And, indeed, the holy obedience of believers, as hath been declared at large before, as a thing quite of another kind than any thing in the world which by the rules, principles, and light of nature, we are directed unto, or instructed in. It is spiritual, heavenly, mysterious, filled with principles and actings of the same kind with those whereby our communion with God in glory unto eternity shall be maintained. Now, although the life of evangelical holiness, be in its principle, form, and chief actings, secret and hidden, hid with Christ in God from the eyes of the world, so that the men thereof neither see, nor know, nor discern, the spiritual life of a believer, in its being, form, and power; yet there are always such evident appearing fruits of it, as are sufficient for their conviction, that the rule of it, which is the doctrine of Christ alone, is holy, wise, and heavenly. And multitudes in all ages have been won over unto the obedience of the gospel, and faith in Christ Jesus, by the holy, fruitful, useful conversation of such as have expressed the power and purity of his doctrine in this kind.

3. The *power* and *efficacy* of the *death of Christ*, as for other ends, so 'to purify us from all iniquity,' and to 'purge

our consciences from dead works, that we may serve the living God,' is herein also required. The world, indeed, sometimes riseth unto that height of pride and contemptuous atheism, as to despise all appearance and profession of purity. But the truth is, if we are not cleansed from our sins in the blood of Christ, if we are not thereby purified from iniquity, we are an abomination unto God, and shall be objects of his wrath for ever. However, the Lord Christ requireth no more of his disciples in this matter unto his glory, but that they profess that 'his blood cleanseth them from their sins,' and evidence the truth of it by such ways and means as the gospel hath appointed unto that end. If their testimony herein unto the efficacy of his death be not received, be despised by the world, and so at present no apparent glory redound unto him thereby, he is satisfied with it, as knowing that the day is coming wherein he will call over these things again, when the rejecting of this testimony shall be an aggravation of condemnation unto the unbelieving world.

I suppose the *evidence* of this *last argument* is plain, and exposed unto all; it is briefly this: without the *holiness* prescribed in the *gospel*, we give nothing of that *glory* unto *Jesus Christ* which he indispensably requireth. And if men will be so sottishly foolish as to expect the greatest benefits and advantages by the mediation of Christ, namely, pardon of sin, salvation, life, and immortality, whilst they neglect and refuse to give him any revenue of glory for all he hath done for them; we may bewail their folly, but cannot prevent their ruin. He saves us freely by his grace, but he requires that we should express a sense of it in ascribing unto him the glory that is his due. And let no man think this is done in wordy expressions; it is no otherwise effected, but by the power of a holy conversation, shewing 'forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.' Nay, there is more in it also; if any one profess himself to be a Christian, that is, a disciple of Jesus Christ, to follow the example of his life, to obey his doctrine, to express the efficacy of his death, and continue in an unholy life; he is a false traitor to him, and gives in his testimony on the side of the world, against him and all that he hath done for us. And it is indeed the flagitious lives of professed Christians that

have brought the life, doctrine, and person of our Lord Jesus Christ into contempt in the world. And I advise all that read or hear of these things, diligently and carefully to study the gospel, that they may receive thence an evidence of the power, truth, glory, and beauty of Christ and his ways; for he that should consider the conversation of men for his guide, will be hardly able to determine which he should choose, whether to be a Pagan, a Mahometan, or a Christian. And shall such persons, by reason of whom the name of Christ is dishonoured and blasphemed continually, expect advantage by him or mercy from him? Will men yet think to live in sensuality, pride, ambition, covetousness, malice, revenge, hatred of all good men, and contempt of purity, and to enjoy life, immortality, and glory, by Christ? Who can sufficiently bewail the dreadful effects of such a horrid infatuation! God teach us all duly to consider, that all the glory and honour of Jesus Christ in the world, with respect unto us, depends on our holiness, and not on any other thing either that we are, have, or may do. If, therefore, we have any love unto him, any spark of gratitude for his unspeakable love, grace, condescension, sufferings, with the eternal fruits of them, any care about, or desire of, his glory and honour in the world, if we would not be found the most hateful traitors at the last day unto his crown, honour, and dignity, if we have any expectation of grace from him, or advantage by him, here or hereafter, let us labour to be 'holy in all manner of conversation,' that we may thereby adorn his doctrine, express his virtues and praises, and grow up into conformity and likeness unto him, who is the firstborn and image of the invisible God.

Μόνῳ Θεῷ σωτῆρι δόξα.

THE

REASON OF FAITH:

OR AN

ANSWER UNTO THAT INQUIRY,

WHEREFORE WE BELIEVE THE SCRIPTURE TO BE THE WORD OF GOD:

WITH

THE CAUSES AND NATURE OF THAT FAITH WHEREWITH WE DO SO:

WHEREIN

THE GROUNDS WHEREON THE HOLY SCRIPTURE
IS BELIEVED TO BE THE WORD OF GOD, WITH FAITH DIVINE
AND SUPERNATURAL,

ARE DECLARED AND VINDICATED.

If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.—Luke xvi. 31.

TO THE READER.

HAVING added a brief account of the design, order, and method of the ensuing discourse, in an Appendix at the close of it, I shall not here detain the reader with the proposal of them. Yet some few things remain, which I judge it necessary to mind him of. Be he who he will, I am sure we shall not differ about the weight of the argument in hand; for, whether it be the truth we contend for, or otherwise, yet it will not be denied, but that the determination of it, and the settling of the minds of men about it, are of the highest concernment unto them. But, whereas so much hath been written of late by others on this subject, any farther debate of it may seem either needless or unseasonable. Something, therefore, may be spoken to evidence that the reader is not imposed on by that, which may absolutely fall under either of those characters. Had the end in and by these discourses been effectually accomplished, it had been altogether useless to renew an endeavour unto the same purpose. But, whereas an opposition unto the Scripture, and the grounds whereon we believe it to be a Divine Revelation, is still openly continued amongst us; a continuation of the defence of the one and the other cannot reasonably be judged either needless or unseasonable. Besides, most of the discourses published

of late, on this subject, have had their peculiar designs, wherein that here tendered is not expressly engaged. For some of them do principally aim to prove, that we have sufficient grounds to believe the Scripture, without any recourse unto, or reliance upon, the authoritative proposal of the church of Rome; which they have sufficiently evinced beyond any possibility of rational contradiction from their adversaries. Others have pleaded and vindicated those rational considerations, whereby our assent unto the divine original of it, is fortified and confirmed against the exceptions and objections of such whose love of sin, and resolutions to live therein, tempts them to seek for shelter in an atheistical contempt of the authority of God, evidencing itself therein. But as neither of these are utterly neglected in the ensuing discourse, so the peculiar design of it is of another nature. For the inquiries managed therein, namely, what is the obligation upon us to believe the Scripture to be the word of God? what are the causes, and what is the nature of that faith, whereby we do so? what it rests on, and is resolved into, so as to become a divine and acceptable duty? do respect the consciences of men immediately, and the way whereby they may come to rest and assurance in believing. Whereas, therefore, it is evident, that many are often shaken in their minds, with those atheistical objections against the divine original and authority of the Scripture, which they frequently meet withal; that many know not how to extricate themselves from the insnaring questions, that they are often attacked withal about them; not for want of a due assent unto them, but of a right understanding what is the true and

formal reason of that assent; what is the firm basis and foundation that it rests upon; what answer they may directly and peremptorily give unto that inquiry, Wherefore do you believe the Scripture to be the word of God? I have endeavoured to give them those directions herein, that upon a due examination they will find compliant with the Scripture itself, right reason, and their own experience. I am not, therefore, altogether without hopes, that this small discourse may have its use, and be given out in its proper season. Moreover, I think it necessary to acquaint the reader, that as I have allowed all the arguments pleaded by others, to prove the divine authority of the Scripture, their proper place and force; so, where I differ in the explication of any thing belonging unto this subject from the conceptions of other men, I have candidly examined such opinions, and the arguments wherewith they are confirmed, without straining the words, cavilling at the expressions, or reflections on the persons of any of the authors of them. And, whereas, I have myself been otherwise dealt withal by many, and know not how soon I may be so again, I do hereby free the persons of such humours and inclinations, from all fear of any reply from me, or the least notice of what they shall be pleased to write or say. Such kind of writings are of the same consideration with me, as those multiplied false reports which some have raised concerning me, the most of them so ridiculous and foolish, so alien from my principles, practice, and course of life, as I cannot but wonder how any persons, pretending to gravity and sobriety, are not sensible how their credulity and inclinations are abused in the hearing and repe-

tition of them. The occasion of this discourse is that which, in the last place, I shall acquaint the reader withal. About three years since I published a book about the Dispensation and Operations of the Spirit of God. That book was one part only of what I designed on that subject. The consideration of the work of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of illumination, of supplication, of consolation, and as the immediate author of all spiritual offices, and gifts extraordinary and ordinary, is designed unto the second part of it. Hereof this ensuing discourse is concerning one part of his work, as a Spirit of illumination, which, upon the earnest requests of some acquainted with the nature and substance of it, I have suffered to come out by itself, that it might be of the more common use, and more easily obtained.

May 11, 1677.

THE

REASON OF FAITH;

OR

THE GROUNDS WHEREON THE SCRIPTURE IS BELIEVED TO BE THE WORD OF GOD,

WITH

FAITH DIVINE AND SUPERNATURAL.

THE principal design of that discourse, whereof the ensuing treatise is a part, is to declare the *work of the Holy Ghost in the illumination of the minds of men.* For this work is particularly and eminently ascribed unto him; or the efficacy of the grace of God by him dispensed; Eph. i. 17, 18. Heb. vi. 4. Luke ii. 32. Acts xiii. 47. xxiv. 45. xxvi. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 9. The objective cause and outward means of it, are the subjects at present designed unto consideration. And it will issue in these two inquiries:

I. *On what grounds, or for what reason, we do believe the Scripture to be the word of God, with faith divine and supernatural, as it is required of us in a way of duty.*

II. *How, or by what means, we may come to understand aright the mind of God in the Scripture, or the revelations that are made unto us of his mind and will therein.*

For by *illumination* in general, as it denotes an effect wrought in the minds of men, I understand that *supernatural knowledge* that any man hath, or may have, of the mind and will of God, as revealed unto him by *supernatural* means, for the law of his faith, life, and obedience. And this, so far as it is comprised in the first of these inquiries, is that, whose declaration we at present design, reserving the latter unto a distinct discourse by itself also. Unto the former some things may be premised.

First, *Supernatural revelation is the only objective cause and*

means of supernatural illumination. These things are commensurate. There is a natural knowledge of supernatural things, and that both theoretical, and practical; Rom. i. 19. ii. 14, 15. And there may be a supernatural knowledge of natural things; 1 Kings iv. 31—34. Exod. xxxi. 3—6. But unto this supernatural illumination, it is required, both that its object be things only supernaturally revealed, or as supernaturally revealed, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. and that it be wrought in us by a supernatural efficiency, or the immediate efficacy of the Spirit of God; Eph. i. 17—19. 2 Cor. iv. 6. This David prays for; Psal. cxix. 18. גל־ עיני 'reveal,' or 'uncover mine eyes,' bring light and spiritual understanding into my mind, 'that I may behold' (*ἀνακεκαλλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ*, 'with open face,' or a sin the Syriac באפא גליתא, 'with a revealed, or uncovered face,' the vail being taken away; 2 Cor. iii. 18.) 'wondrous things out of thy law.' The light he prayed for within, did merely respect the doctrine of the law without. This the apostle fully declares, Heb. i. 1, 2. The various supernatural revelations that God hath made of himself, his mind and will, from first to last, are the sole and adequate object of supernatural illumination.

Secondly, This *divine external revelation,* was originally by various ways (which we have elsewhere declared) given unto sundry persons immediately, partly for their own instruction and guidance, in the knowledge of God and his will, and partly by their ministry, to be communicated unto the church. So was it granted unto Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who thereon prophesied to the warning and instruction of others; Jude 14, 15. And to Noah, who became thereby a preacher of righteousness; 2 Pet. ii. 5. And to Abraham, who thereon commanded his children and household to keep the way of the Lord; Gen. xviii. 19. And other instances of the like kind may be given; Gen. iv. 26. v. 28. And this course did God continue a long time, even from the first promise to the giving of the law, before any revelations were committed to writing, for the space of two thousand four hundred and sixty years. For so long a season did God enlighten the minds of men, by supernatural, external, immediate, occasional, revelations. Sundry things may be observed of this divine dispensation. As,

1. That it did *sufficiently evidence itself to be from God,* unto

the minds of those unto whom it was granted, and theirs also unto whom these revelations were by them communicated. For during this season Satan used his utmost endeavours to possess the minds of men with his delusions, under the pretence of divine supernatural inspirations. For hereunto belongs the original of all his oracles and enthusiasms among the nations of the world. There was, therefore, a divine power and efficacy attending all divine revelations, ascertaining and infallibly assuring the minds of men of their being from God. For if it had not been so, men had never been able to secure themselves, that they were not imposed on by the crafty deceits of Satan, especially in such revelations as seemed to contain things contrary to their reason, as in the command given to Abraham for the sacrificing his son; Gen. xxii. 2. Wherefore, these immediate revelations had not been a sufficient means to secure the faith and obedience of the church, if they had not carried along with them their own evidence that they were from God. Of what nature that evidence was, we shall afterward inquire. For the present I shall only say, that it was an evidence unto faith and not to sense; as is that also which we have now by the Scripture. It is not like that which the sun gives of itself by its light, which there needs no exercise of reason to assure us of; for sense is irresistibly affected with it. But it is like the evidence which the heavens and the earth give of their being made and created of God, and thereby of his being and power. This they do undeniably and infallibly; Psal. xix. 1, 2. Rom. i. 19—21. Yet is it required hereunto, that men do use and exercise the best of their rational abilities in the consideration and contemplation of them. Where this is neglected, notwithstanding their open and visible evidence unto the contrary, men degenerate into atheism. God so gave out these revelations of himself, as to require the exercise of the faith, conscience, obedience, and reason of them unto whom they were made, and therein they gave full assurance of their proceeding from him. So he tells us that his word differeth from all other pretended revelations, as the wheat doth from the chaff; Jer. xxiii. 28. But yet it is our duty to try and sift the wheat from the chaff, or we may not evidently discern the one from the other.

2. The things so revealed were *sufficient* to guide and direct all persons in the knowledge of their duty to God, in all that was required of them in a way of faith or obedience. God from the beginning gave out the knowledge of his will πολυμερῶς, 'by sundry parts and degrees;' yet so that every age and season had light enough to guide them, in the whole obedience required of them, and unto their edification therein. They had knowledge enough to enable them to offer sacrifices in faith, as did Abel; to walk with God, as did Enoch; and to teach their families the fear of the Lord, as did Abraham. The world perished not for want of sufficient revelation of the mind of God at any time. Indeed, when we go to consider those divine instructions which are upon record, that God granted unto them, we are scarce able to discern how they were sufficiently enlightened, in all that was necessary for them to believe and do. But they were unto them as a 'light shining in a dark place.' Set up but a candle in a dark room, and it will sufficiently enlighten it, for men to attend their necessary occasions therein. But when the sun is risen and shineth in at all the windows, the light of the candle grows so dim and useless, that it seems strange that any could have advantage thereby. The Sun of righteousness is now risen upon us, and immortality is brought to light by the gospel. If we look now on the revelations granted unto them of old, we may yet see there was light in them, which yields us little more advantage than the light of a candle in the sun. But unto them who lived before this sun arose, they were a sufficient guide unto all duties of faith and obedience. For,

3. There was, during this season, *a sufficient ministry*, for the declaration of the *revelations*, which God made of himself and his will. There was the natural ministry of parents, who were obliged to instruct their children and families in the knowledge of the truth which they had received. And whereas this began in Adam, who first received the promise, and therewithal whatsoever was necessary unto faith and obedience; the knowledge of it could not be lost without the wilful neglect of parents in teaching, or of children and families in learning. And they had the extraordinary ministry of such as God intrusted new revelations withal, for the confirmation and enlargement of those before received,

who were all of them preachers of righteousness unto the rest of mankind. And it may be manifested, that from the giving of the first promise, when divine external revelations began to be the rule of faith and life unto the church, to the writing of the law, there was always alive one or other, who receiving divine revelations immediately, were a kind of infallible guides unto others. If it was otherwise at any time, it was after the death of the patriarchs, before the call of Moses, during which time, all things went into darkness and confusion. For oral tradition alone would not preserve the truth of former revelations. But by whom these instructions were received, they had a sufficient outward means for their illumination, before any divine revelations were recorded by writing. Yet,

4. This way of instruction, as it was in itself *imperfect*, and liable to many disadvantages, so through the weakness, negligence, and wickedness of men, it proved *insufficient* to retain the knowledge of God in the world. For under this dispensation the generality of mankind fell into their great apostacy from God, and betook themselves unto the conduct and service of the devil; of the ways, means, and degrees whereof, I have discoursed elsewhere[a]. Hereon God also regarded them not, but 'suffered all nations to walk in their own ways;' Acts xiv. 16. giving them up to their own hearts' lusts, to 'walk in their own counsels;' as it is expressed, Psal. lxxxi. 12. And although this fell not out without the horrible wickedness and ingratitude of the world; yet there being then no certain standard of divine truth, whereunto they might repair, they brake off the easier from God through the imperfection of this dispensation. If it shall be said, that since the revelation of the will of God hath been committed unto writing, men have apostatized from the knowledge of God, as is evident in many nations of the world, which sometimes professed the gospel, but are now overrun with Heathenism, Mahometism, and idolatry: I say, this hath not come to pass through any defect in the way and means of illumination, or the communication of the truth unto them; but God hath given them up to be destroyed for their wickedness and ingratitude, and unless 'we repent, we shall all likewise perish; Rom. i. 18. 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. Otherwise,

[a] De Natura Theologiæ, lib. 3.

where the standard of the word is once fixed, there is a constant means of preserving divine revelations. Wherefore,

Thirdly, God hath gathered up into the *Scripture* all divine revelations given out by himself from the beginning of the world, and all that ever shall be so to the end thereof, which are of *general use* unto the church; that it may be thoroughly instructed in the *whole mind and will of God*, and directed in all that worship of him, and obedience unto him, which is necessary to give us acceptance with him here, and to bring us unto the eternal enjoyment of him hereafter. For, 1. when God first committed the law to writing, with all those things which accompanied it, he obliged the church unto the use of it alone, without additions of any kind. Now this he would not have done, had he not expressed therein, that is, the Books of Moses, all that was any way needful unto the faith and obedience of the church. For he did not only command them to attend with all diligence unto his word, as it was then written for their instruction and direction in faith and obedience, annexing all sorts of promises unto their so doing, Deut. vi. 6, 7. but also expressly forbids them, as was said, to add any thing thereunto, or to conjoin any thing therewith; Deut. iv. 2. xii. 32. which he would not have done, had he omitted other divine revelations, before given, that were any way necessary unto the use of the church. As he added many new ones, so he gathered in all the old from the unfaithful repository of tradition, and fixed them in a writing, given by divine inspiration. 2. For all other divine revelations, which were given out to the church, for its use, in general, under the Old Testament, they are all comprised in the following books thereof; nor was this (that I know of) ever questioned by any person pretending to sobriety; though some, who would be glad of any pretence against the integrity and perfection of the Scripture, have fruitlessly wrangled about the loss of some books, which they can never prove concerning any one, that was certainly of a divine original. 3. The full revelation of the whole mind of God, whereunto nothing pretending thereunto is ever to be added, was committed unto, and perfected by, Jesus Christ; Heb. i. 1, 2. That the revelations of God, made by him, whether in his own person, or by his Spirit unto his apostles, were also by divine inspiration committed

to writing, is expressly affirmed concerning what he delivered in his own personal ministry; Luke i. 4. Acts i. 1. John xx. 31. and may be proved by uncontrollable arguments concerning the rest of them. Hence, as the Scriptures of the Old Testament were shut up with a caution and admonition unto the church, to adhere unto the law and testimony, with threatening of a curse unto the contrary; Mal. iv. 4—6. So the writings of the New Testament are closed with a curse on any that shall presume to add any thing more thereunto; Rev. xxii. 18. Wherefore,

Fourthly, The Scripture is now become *the only external means of divine supernatural illumination*, because it is the only repository of all divine supernatural revelation; Psal. xix. 7, 8. Isa. viii. 20. 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. The pretences of tradition, as a collateral means of preserving and communicating supernatural revelation, have been so often evicted of falsity, that I shall not farther press their impeachment. Besides, I intend those in this discourse by whom it is acknowledged, that the Bible is, as a sufficient and perfect, so the only, treasury of divine revelations: and what hath been offered by any to weaken or impair its esteem, by taking off from its credibility, perfection, and sufficiency, as unto all its own proper ends, hath brought no advantage unto the church, nor benefit unto the faith of believers. But yet,

Fifthly, In asserting the Scripture to be the *only* external means of divine revelation, I do it not *exclusively* unto those institutions of God which are *subordinate* unto it, and appointed as means to make it effectual unto our souls. As,

1. Our own *personal endeavours* in reading, studying, and meditating on the Scripture, that we may come unto a right apprehension of the things contained in it, are required unto this purpose. It is known to all, how frequently this duty is pressed upon us, and what promises are annexed to the performance of it; see Deut. vi. 6, 7. xi. 18, 19. Josh. i. 8. Psal. i. 2. cxix. Col. iii. 16. 2 Tim. iii. 15. Without this it is in vain to expect illumination by the word. And, therefore, we may see multitudes living and walking in extreme darkness, when yet the word is every where nigh unto them; bread, which is the staff of life, will yet nourish no man who doth not provide it, and feed upon it; no more would manna,

unless it was gathered and prepared. Our own natures, and the nature of divine revelations considered, and what is necessary for the application of the one to the other, makes this evident. For God will instruct us in his mind and will, as we are men, in and by the rational faculties of our souls. Nor is an external revelation capable of making any other impression on us, but what is so received. Wherefore, when I say, that the Scripture is the only external means of our illumination, I include therein all our own personal endeavours to come to the knowledge of the mind of God therein, which shall be afterward spoken unto. And those, who under any pretences do keep, drive, or persuade, men from reading and meditating on the Scripture, do take an effectual course to keep them in and under the power of darkness.

2. The *mutual instruction* of one another in the mind of God out of the Scripture, is also required hereunto. For we are obliged by the law of nature to endeavour the good of others in various degrees, as our children, our families, our neighbours, and all with whom we have conversation. And this is the principal good, absolutely considered, that we can communicate unto others, namely, to instruct them in the knowledge of the mind of God. This whole duty in all the degrees of it is represented in that command, 'Thou shalt teach my words diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up;' Deut. vi. 7. Thus, when our Saviour found his disciples talking of the things of God by the way-side, he bearing unto them the person of a private man, instructed them in the sense of the Scripture; Luke xxiv. 26, 27. 32. And the neglect of this duty in the world, which is so great that the very mention of it, or the least attempt to perform it, is a matter of scorn and reproach, is one cause of that great ignorance and darkness which yet abounds among us. But the nakedness of this folly, whereby men would be esteemed Christians in the open contempt of all duties of Christianity, will in due time be laid open.

3. The *ministry of the word* in the church is that which is principally included in this assertion. The Scripture is the only means of illumination, but it becometh so principally

by the application of it unto the minds of men in the ministry of the word; see Matt. v. 14, 15. 2 Cor. v. 18—20. Eph. iv. 11—15. 1 Tim. iii. 15. The church, and the ministry of it, are the ordinances of God unto this end, that his mind and will as revealed in the word, may be made known to the children of men, whereby they are enlightened. And that church and ministry, whereof this is not the first principal design and work, is neither appointed of God, nor approved by him. Men will one day find themselves deceived in trusting to empty names, it is duty alone, that will be comfort and reward; Dan. xii. 3.

Sixthly, That the *Scripture*, which thus contains the whole of divine revelation, may be a sufficient external cause of illumination unto us, two things are required:

1. That we *believe it to be a divine revelation*, that is, the word of God, or a declaration of himself, his mind and will, immediately proceeding from him; or that it is of a pure divine *original*, proceeding neither from the folly or deceit, nor from the skill or honesty, of men; so is it stated, 2 Pet. i. 19—21. Heb. i. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 16. Isa. viii. 20. It tenders no light or instruction under any other notion, but as it comes immediately from God; not as the word of man, but as 'it is indeed the word of the living God;' 1 Thess. ii. 13. And whatever any one may learn from or by the Scriptures under any other consideration, it belongeth not unto the illumination we inquire after; Nehem. viii. 8. Isa. xxviii. 9. Hos. xiv. 9. Prov. i. 6. Psal. cxix. 34. Matt. xv. 16. 2 Tim. ii. 7. 1 John v. 20.

2. That we *understand the things declared in it*, or the mind of God as revealed and expressed therein. For if it be given unto us a *sealed book*, which we cannot read, either because it is *sealed*, or because we are *ignorant* and cannot read, whatever visions or means of light it hath in it, we shall have no advantage thereby; Isa. xxix. 11, 12. It is not the words themselves of the Scripture only, but our understanding them that gives us light; Psal. cxix. 130. פתח דבריך יאיר, the opening the door, 'the entrance of thy word giveth light.' It must be opened, or it will not enlighten. So the disciples understood not the testimonies of the Scripture concerning the Lord Christ, they were not enlightened by them, until he expounded them unto them; Luke xxiv. 27, 45. As we have

the same instance in the eunuch and Philip; Acts viii. 31, 35, 36. To this very day the nation of the Jews have the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the outward letter of them in such esteem and veneration, that they even adore and worship them, yet are they not enlightened by it. And the same is fallen out among many that are called Christians, or they could never embrace such foolish opinions, and practise such idolatries in worship as some of them do, who yet enjoy the letter of the gospel.

And this brings me to my design, which we have been thus far making way unto; and it is to shew that both these are from the Holy Ghost; namely, that we *truly believe* the Scripture to be the word of God; and that we *understand savingly* the mind of God therein, both which belong unto our illumination.

That which I shall first inquire into, is, the *way how, and the ground whereon, we come to believe the Scripture to be the word of God in a due manner.* For that this is required of us in a *way of duty*, namely, that we should believe the Scripture to be the word of God with *faith divine and supernatural*, I suppose will not be denied, and it shall be afterward proved. And what is the work of the Spirit of God herein, will be our first inquiry.

Secondly, Whereas we see by experience, that all who have or enjoy the Scripture, do not yet *understand it*, or come to a useful saving knowledge of the mind and will of God therein revealed; our other inquiry shall be, how we may come to understand the word of God aright, and what is the work of the Spirit of God in the assistance which he affordeth us unto that purpose.

With respect unto the first of these inquiries, whereunto the present discourse is singly designed, I affirm that it *is the work of the Holy Spirit to enable us to believe the Scripture to be the word of God*, or the supernatural immediate revelation of his mind unto us, and infallibly to evidence it unto our minds, so as that we may spiritually and savingly acquiesce therein. Some, upon a mistake of this proposition, do seem to suppose, that we resolve all faith into private suggestions of the Spirit, or deluding pretences thereof, and some, it may be, will be ready to apprehend that we confound the efficient cause, and formal reason of faith or believing, render-

ing all rational arguments, and external testimonies useless. But, indeed, there neither is nor shall be any occasion administered unto these fears or imaginations. For we shall plead nothing in this matter but what is consonant to the faith and judgment of the ancient and present church of God, as shall be fully evidenced in our progress. I know some have found out other ways whereby the minds of men, as they suppose, may be sufficiently satisfied in the divine authority of the Scripture. But I have tasted of their new wine and desire it not, because I know the old to be better, though what they plead is of use in its proper place.

My design requires that I should confine my discourse unto as narrow bounds as possible, and I shall so do; shewing,

1. What it is, in general, *infallibly to believe the Scripture to be the word of God,* and what is the ground and reason of our so doing; or, what it is *to believe the Scripture to be the word of God,* as we are required to believe it so to be in a way of duty.

2. That there are *external arguments* of the divine original of the Scripture, which are effectual motives to persuade us to give an unfeigned assent thereunto.

3. That yet, moreover, God requires of us, that we believe them to be his word with *faith divine, supernatural,* and *infallible.*

4. *Evidence* the grounds and reasons whereon we do so believe, and ought so to do.

Unto these heads most of what ensues in the first part of this discourse may be reduced.

It is meet that we should clear the foundation whereon we build, and the principles whereon we do proceed; that what we design to prove may be the better understood by all sorts of persons, whose edification we intend. For these things are the equal concernment of the learned and unlearned. Wherefore, some things must be insisted on, which are generally known and granted. And our first inquiry is, *What it is to believe the Scripture to be the word of God with faith divine and supernatural,* according as it is our duty so to do.

And in our *believing,* or our *faith,* two things are to be considered: (1.) *What* it is that we do believe; and, (2.) *Wherefore* we do so believe it? The firs is the material object of

our faith, namely, the things which we do believe; the latter, the formal object of it, or the cause and reason why we do believe them; and these things are distinct. The material object of our faith, are the things revealed in the Scripture, declared unto us in propositions of truth. For things must be so proposed unto us, or we cannot believe them. That God is one in three persons; that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and the like propositions of truth are the material object of our faith, or the things that we do believe; and the reason why we do believe them, is, because they are proposed in the Scripture. Thus, the apostle expresseth the whole of what we intend, 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. 'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.' Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, are the things proposed unto us to be believed, and so the object of our faith. But the reason why we believe them, is, because they are declared in the Scriptures; see Acts viii. 28—30. Sometimes, indeed, this expression of believing the Scriptures, by a metonymy, denotes both the formal and material objects of our faith, the Scriptures themselves as such, and the things contained in them; so John ii. 22. 'They believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus said,' or the things delivered in the Scripture, and farther declared by Christ, which before they understood not. And they did so believe what was declared in the Scriptures, because it was so declared in them; both are intended in the same expression, 'they believed the Scripture,' under various considerations; so Acts xxvi. 27. The material object of our faith, therefore, are the articles of our creed, by whose enumeration we answer unto that question, what we believe? giving an account of the hope that is in us, as the apostle doth, Acts xxvi. 22, 23. But if, moreover, we are asked a reason of our faith or hope, or why we believe the things we do profess, as God to be one in three persons, Jesus Christ to be the Son of God? we do not answer, because so it is, for this is that which we believe, which were senseless. But we must give some other answer unto that inquiry, whether it be made by others or ourselves. The proper answer unto this question contains the formal reason and object of our faith, that which it rests

upon and is resolved into. And this is that which we look after.

2. We do not in this inquiry intend any kind of persuasion or faith but that which is *divine* and *infallible*, both which it is from its formal reason or objective cause. Men may be able to give some kind of reasons, why they believe what they profess so to do, that will not suffice or abide the trial in this case, although they themselves may rest in them. Some, it may be, can give no other account hereof, but that they have been so instructed by them whom they have sufficient reason to give credit unto; or that they have so received them by tradition from their fathers. Now, whatever persuasion these reasons may beget in the minds of men, that the things which they profess to believe are true, yet if they are alone, it is not divine faith whereby they do believe, but that which is merely human, as being resolved into human testimony only, or an opinion on probable arguments; for no faith can be of any other kind, than is the evidence it reflects on, or ariseth from. I say, it is so where they are alone: for I doubt not but that some who have never farther considered the reason of their believing than the teaching of their instructors, have yet that evidence in their own souls of the truth and authority of God in what they believe, that with respect thereunto their faith is divine and supernatural. The faith of most hath a beginning and progress not unlike that of the Samaritans; John iv. 40—42. as shall be afterward declared.

3. When we inquire after faith that is *infallible*, or believing *infallibly*, which, as we shall shew hereafter, is necessary in this case, we do not intend an *inherent quality* in the subject, as though he that believes with faith *infallible* must himself also be infallible; much less do we speak of *infallibility* absolutely, which is a property of God, who alone, from the perfection of his nature, can neither deceive nor be deceived. But it is that property or adjunct of the assent of our minds unto divine truths or supernatural revelations, whereby it is differenced from all other kinds of assent whatever. And this it hath from its formal object, or the evidence whereon we give this assent. For the nature of every assent is given unto it by the nature of the evidence which it proceedeth from, or relieth on. This in divine faith is di-

vine revelation, which being infallible, renders the faith that rests on it, and is resolved into it, infallible also. No man can believe that which is false, or which may be false, with divine faith, for that which renders it divine, is the divine truth and infallibility of the ground and evidence which it is built upon. But a man may believe that which is true, infallibly so, and yet his faith not be infallible; that the Scripture is the word of God is infallibly true, yet the faith whereby a man believes it so to be, may be fallible, for it is such as his evidence is, and no other; he may believe it to be so on tradition, or the testimony of the church of Rome only, or on outward arguments, all which being fallible, his faith is so also, although the things he assents unto be infallibly true. Wherefore, unto this faith divine and infallible, it is not required that the person in whom it is, be infallible; nor is it enough that the thing itself believed be infallibly true, but, moreover, that the evidence whereon he doth believe it be infallible also. So it was with them who received divine revelations immediately from God: it was not enough that the things revealed unto them were infallibly true, but they were to have infallible evidence of the revelation itself; then was their faith infallible, though their persons were fallible. With this faith then a man can believe nothing but what is divinely true, and therefore it is infallible; and the reason is, because God's veracity, who is the God of truth, is the only object of it; hence saith the prophet, האמינו ביהוה אלהיכם ותאמנו, 2 Chron. xx. 20. 'Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established;' or that faith which is in God and his word is fixed on truth, or is infallible. Hence the inquiry in this case is, What is the reason why we believe any thing with this faith divine or supernatural? or what it is, the believing whereof makes our faith divine, infallible, and supernatural? Wherefore,

4. The *authority* and *veracity* of God revealing the *material* objects of our faith, or what it is our duty to believe, is the *formal* object and reason of our faith, from whence it ariseth and whereinto it is ultimately resolved. That is, the only reason why we do believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that God is one single essence subsisting in three persons, is, because that God who is truth, the 'God of truth,' Deut. xxxii. 4. who 'cannot lie,' Tit. i. 2. and whose 'word is truth,'

John xvii. 17. and the 'Spirit' which gave it out 'is truth,' 1 John v. 6. hath revealed these things to be so; and our believing these things on that ground renders our faith *divine and supernatural.* Supposing, also, a respect unto the subjective efficiency of the Holy Ghost, inspiring it into our minds, whereof afterward. For, to speak distinctly, our faith is *supernatural,* with respect unto the production of it in our minds by the Holy Ghost; and *infallible,* with respect unto the formal reason of it, which is divine revelation; and is *divine,* in opposition unto what is merely human, on both accounts.

As things are proposed unto us to be believed as true, faith in its assent respects only the truth or veracity of God; but whereas this faith is required of us in a way of obedience, and is considered not only physically in its nature, but morally also as our duty, it respects also the authority of God, which I, therefore, join with the truth of God, as the formal reason of our faith; see 2 Sam. vii. 28. And these things the Scripture pleads and argues, when faith is required of us in the way of obedience. 'Thus saith the Lord,' is that which is proposed unto us as the reason why we should believe what is spoken, whereunto oftentimes other divine names and titles are added, signifying his authority who requires us to believe; 'Thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel;' Isa. xxx. 15. 'Thus saith the High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy;' Isa. lvii. 15. 'Believe the Lord your God;' 2 Chron. xx. 20. 'The word of the Lord' precedeth most revelations in the prophets, and other reason why we should believe, the Scripture proposeth none; Heb. i. 1, 2. yea, the interposition of any other authority between the things to be believed and our souls and consciences, besides the authority of God, overthrows the nature of divine faith; I do not say, the interposition of any other means whereby we should believe, of which sort God hath appointed many, but the interposition of any other authority, upon which we should believe, as that pretended in and by the church of Rome. No men can be lords of our faith, though they may be helpers of our joy.

5. The *authority* and *truth of God,* considered in themselves absolutely, are not the immediate *formal object* of our faith, though they are the *ultimate* whereinto it is resolved.

For we can believe nothing on their account unless it be evidenced unto us; and this evidence of them is in that revelation which God is pleased to make of himself; for that is the only means whereby our consciences and minds are affected with his truth and authority. We do, therefore, no otherwise rest on the truth and veracity of God in any thing than we rest on the revelation which he makes unto us, for that is the only way whereby we are affected with them; not 'the Lord is true' absolutely, but 'thus saith the Lord,' and 'the Lord hath spoken,' is that which we have immediate regard unto. Hereby alone are our minds affected with the authority and veracity of God, and by what way soever it is made unto us, it is sufficient and able so to affect us. At first, as hath been shewed, it was given immediately to some persons, and preserved for the use of others, in an oral ministry; but now all revelation, as hath also been declared, is contained in the Scriptures only.

6. It follows, that our faith, whereby we believe any divine supernatural truth, is resolved into the Scripture, as the only means of divine revelation, affecting our minds and consciences with the authority and truth of God; or the Scripture, as the only immediate, divine, infallible revelation of the mind and will of God, is the first immediate *formal object* of our faith, the sole reason why, and ground whereon, we do believe the things that are revealed, with faith divine, supernal, and infallible. We do believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. Why do we so do, on what ground or reason? It is because of the authority of God commanding us so to do, and the truth of God testifying thereunto. But how or by what means are our minds and consciences affected with the authority and truth of God, so as to believe with respect unto them, which makes our faith divine and supernatural? It is alone the divine, supernatural, infallible revelation that he hath made of this sacred truth, and of his will, that we should believe it. But what is this revelation, or where is it to be found? It is the Scripture alone which contains the entire revelation that God hath made of himself in all things which he will have us to believe or do. Hence,

7. The last inquiry ariseth, *how*, or *on what ground*, for *what reasons*, do we believe the Scripture to be a divine revelation proceeding immediately from God; or to be that word

of God which is truth divine and infallible? Whereunto we answer, it is *solely* on the evidence that the Spirit of God, *in and by the Scripture itself*, gives unto us, that it was given by immediate inspiration from God. Or the ground and reason whereon we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, are the authority and truth of God, evidencing themselves in and by it unto the minds and consciences of men. Hereon, as whatever we assent unto as proposed in the Scripture, our faith rests on, and is resolved into, the veracity and faithfulness of God, so is it also in this of believing the Scripture itself to be the infallible word of God, seeing we do it on *no other* grounds but its *own evidence* that so it is.

This is that which is principally to be proved, and therefore to prepare for it, and to remove prejudices, something is to be spoken to prepare the way thereunto.

1. There are sundry cogent arguments which are taken from *external considerations* of the Scripture, that evince it on rational grounds to be from God. All these are *motives of credibility*, or effectual persuasives to account and esteem it to be the word of God. And although they neither are, nor is it possible they ever should be, the ground and reason whereon we believe it so to be with *faith divine and supernatural;* yet are they necessary unto the confirmation of our faith herein against temptations, oppositions, and objections. These arguments have been pleaded by many, and that usefully, and therefore it is not needful for me to insist upon them. And they are the same for the substance of them in ancient and modern writers, however managed by some with more learning, dexterity, and force of reasoning than by others. It may not be expected, therefore, that in this short discourse, designed unto another purpose, I should give them much improvement. However, I shall a little touch on those which seem to be most cogent, and that in them wherein, in my apprehension, their strength doth lie. And I shall do this to manifest, that although we plead that no man can believe the Scriptures to be the word of God with faith *divine, supernatural, and infallible*, but upon its *own internal, divine evidence* and *efficacy*, yet we allow and make use of all those external arguments of its sacred truth and divine original which are pleaded by others, ascribing unto them as much weight and cogency as they can do, acknowledging the persuasion which

they beget and effect to be as firm as they can pretend it to be. Only we do not judge them to contain the *whole* of the evidence which we have for faith to rest in, or to be resolved into; yea, not that at all, which renders it *divine, supernatural, and infallible.* The rational arguments, we say, which are, or may be, used in this matter, with the human testimonies whereby they are corroborated, may and ought to be made use of and insisted on; and it is but vainly pretended that their use is superseded by our other assertions; as though, where faith is required, all the subservient use of reason were absolutely discarded, and our faith thereby rendered *irrational;* and the assent unto the divine original and authority of the Scriptures, which the mind ought to give upon them, we grant to be of as high a nature as is pretended to be, namely, a *moral certainty.* Moreover, the conclusion which unprejudiced reason will make upon these arguments, is more firm, better grounded, and more pleadable, than that which is built merely on the *sole authority* of any church whatever. But this we assert, that there is an assent of another kind, unto the divine original and authority of the Scriptures required of us; namely, that of faith divine and supernatural. Of this none will say that it can be effected by, or resolved into, the best and most cogent of rational arguments and external testimonies which are absolutely human and fallible. For it doth imply a contradiction to believe infallibly upon fallible evidence. Wherefore, I shall prove, that beyond all these arguments and their effects upon our minds, there is an assent unto the Scripture as the word of God required of us with faith divine, supernatural, and infallible; and, therefore, there must be a divine evidence which is the formal object and reason of it, which alone it rests on, and is resolved into, which shall also be declared and proved. But yet, as was said in the first place, because their property is to level the ground, and to remove the rubbish of objections out of the way, that we may build the safer on the sure foundation, I shall mention some of those which I esteem justly pleadable in this cause. And,

1. The *antiquity* of these writings, and of the divine revelation contained in them, is pleaded in evidence of their divine original. And it may be so deservedly. For where it is absolute, it is unquestionable: that which is most an-

cient in any kind is most true; God himself makes use of this plea against idols, Isa. xliii. 10—12. 'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord: I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour; I have declared and have saved, and I have shewed when there was no strange god amongst you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.' That which he asserts is, that he alone is God, and no other. This he calls the people to testify by this argument, that he was among them as God, that is, in the church, before any strange god was known or named. And so it is justly pleaded in the behalf of this revelation of the mind of God in the Scripture; it was in the world long before any other thing or writing pretended to be given unto the same end. Whatever, therefore, ensued with the like design, must either be set up in competition with it, or opposition unto it, above which it hath its advantage merely from its antiquity. Whereas, therefore, this writing in the first books of it, is acknowledged to be ancienter than any other that is extant in the world, or indeed that ever was so, and may be proved so to be: it is beyond all reasonable apprehension that it should be of human original. For we know how low, weak, and imperfect, all human inventions were at the first, how rude and unpolished in every kind, until time, observation, following additions and diminutions, had shaped, formed, and improved them. But this writing coming forth in the world, absolutely the first in its kind, directing us in the knowledge of God and ourselves, was at first and at once so absolutely complete and perfect, that no art, industry, or wisdom of man, could ever yet find any just defect in it, or was able to add any thing unto it, whereby it might be bettered or improved. Neither from the beginning would it ever admit of any additions unto it, but what came from the same fountain of divine revelation and inspiration, clearing itself in all ages from all addition and superfetation of men whatever. This, at least, puts a singular character upon this book, and represents it with that reverend awe and majesty, that it is the highest petulancy not to pay it a sacred respect.

This argument is pursued by many, at large, as that which affordeth great variety of historical and chronological observations. And it hath been so scanned and improved, that nothing but the giving of it a new dress remains for present

or future diligence. But the real force of it lies in the consideration of the people, by and amongst whom this revelation first commenced in the world, and the time wherein it did so. When some nations had so improved and cultivated the light of nature as greatly to excel others in wisdom and knowledge, they generally looked upon the people of the Jews as ignorant and barbarous. And the more wise any of them conceived themselves, the more they despised them. And, indeed, they were utter strangers unto all those arts and sciences, whereby the faculties of men's minds are naturally enlightened and enlarged. Nor did they pretend unto any wisdom, whereby to stand in competition with other nations, but only what they received by divine revelations. This alone God himself had taught them to look upon and esteem as their only wisdom before all the world; Deut. iv. 6—8. Now, we shall not need to consider what were the first attempts of other nations, in expressing their conceptions concerning things divine, the duty and happiness of man. The Egyptians and Grecians were those who vied for reputation in the improvement of this wisdom. But it is known and confessed that the utmost production of their endeavours, were things foolish, irrational, and absurd, contrary to the being and providence of God, to the light of nature, leading mankind into a maze of folly and wickedness. But we may consider what they attained unto in the fulness of time by their utmost improvement of science, wisdom, mutual intelligence, experience, communication, laborious study and observation. When they had added and subducted to and from the inventions of all former ages from time immemorial, when they had used and improved the reason, wisdom, invention, and conjectures of all that went before them in the study of this wisdom, and had discarded whatever they had found by experience unsuited to natural light and the common reason of mankind, yet it must be acknowledged that the apostle passeth a just censure on the utmost of their attainments, namely, that they waxed vain in their imaginations, and the world in wisdom knew not God. Whence then was it that in one nation, esteemed barbarous, and really so with respect unto that wisdom, those arts and sciences, which ennobled other nations, from that antiquity wherein it is not pretended that reason and wisdom had received any considerable improve-

ment; without converse, communication, learning, or experience, there should at once proceed such a law, doctrine, and instructions, concerning God and man, so stable, certain, uniform, as should not only incomparably excel all products of human wisdom unto that purpose, however advantaged by time and experience, but also abide invariable throughout all generations, so as that whatever hath been advanced in opposition unto it, or but differing from it, hath quickly sunk under the weight of its own unreasonableness and folly? This one consideration, unless men have a mind to be contentious, gives sufficient satisfaction, that this book could have no other original, but what it pleads for itself, namely, an immediate emanation from God.

2. It is apparent that God in all ages hath had a great regard unto it, and acted his power and care in its preservation. Were not the Bible what it pretends to be, there had been nothing more suitable to the nature of God, and more becoming divine providence, then long since to have blotted it out of the world. For to suffer a book to be in the world, from the beginning of times, falsely pretending his name and authority, seducing so great a portion of mankind into a pernicious and ruinous apostacy from him, as it must do, and doth, if it be not of a divine original, and exposing inconceivable multitudes of the best, wisest, and soberest amongst them, unto all sorts of bloody miseries which they have undergone in the behalf of it, seems not consonant unto that infinite goodness, wisdom, and care, wherewith this world is governed from above. But, on the contrary, whereas the malicious craft of Satan, and the prevalent power and rage of mankind, hath combined and been set at work to the ruin and utter suppression of this book, proceeding sometimes so far as that there was no appearing way for its escape; yet through the watchful care and providence of God, sometimes putting itself forth in miraculous instances, it hath been preserved unto this day, and shall be so to the consummation of all things. The event of that which was spoken by our Saviour, Matt. v. 18. doth invincibly prove the divine approbation of this book, as that doth its divine original; 'Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.' God's perpetual care over the Scriptures for so many ages, that not a letter of it should be

utterly lost, nothing that hath the least tendency towards its end should perish, is evidence sufficient of his regard unto it. Especially would it be so, if we should consider with what remarkable judgments and severe reflections of vengeance on its opposers, this care hath been managed, instances whereof might be easily multiplied. And if any will not ascribe this preservation of the books of the Bible, not only in their being, but in their purity and integrity free from the least just suspicion of corruption, or the intermixture of any thing human or heterogeneous, unto the care of God; it is incumbent on him to assign some other cause proportionate to such an effect, whilst it was the interest of heaven, and the endeavour of the earth and hell to have it corrupted and destroyed. For my part, I cannot but judge that he that seeth not a hand of divine Providence stretched out in the preservation of this book, and all that is in it, its words and syllables, for thousands of years, through all the overthrows and deluges of calamities that have befallen the world, with the weakness of the means whereby it hath been preserved, and the interest, in some ages, of all those in whose power it was to have it corrupted, as it was of the apostate churches of the Jews and Christians, with the open opposition that hath been made unto it, doth not believe there is any such thing as divine Providence at all. It was first written in the very infancy of the Babylonian empire, with which it afterward contemporized about nine hundred years. By this monarchy that people which alone had these 'oracles of God committed unto them,' were oppressed, destroyed, and carried into captivity. But this book was then preserved amongst them whilst they were absolutely under the power of their enemies, although it condemned them and all their gods and religious worship, wherewith we know how horribly mankind is enraged. Satan had enthroned himself as the object of their worship, and the author of all ways of divine veneration amongst them. These they adhered unto as their principal interest, as all people do unto that they esteem their religion. In the whole world there was nothing that judged, condemned, opposed him or them, but this book only, which was now absolutely in their power. If that by any means could have been destroyed, then when it was in the hands but of a few, and those, for the most part, flagi-

tious in their lives, hating the things contained in it, and wholly under the power of their adversaries, the interest of Satan, and the whole world in idolatry, had been secured. But through the mere provision of divine care it outlived that monarchy, and saw the ruin of its greatest adversaries. So it did, also, during the continuance of the Persian monarchy which succeeded, whilst the people was still under the power of idolators, against whom this was the only testimony in the world. By some branches of the Grecian monarchy a most fierce and diligent attempt was made to have utterly destroyed it; but still it was snatched by divine power out of the furnace, not one hair of it being singed, or the least detriment brought unto its perfection. The Romans destroyed both the people and place designed until then for its preservation, carrying the ancient copy of the law in triumph to Rome on the conquest of Jerusalem; and whilst all absolute power and dominion in the whole world, where this book was known or heard of, was in their hands, they exercised a rage against it for sundry ages, with the same success that former enemies had. From the very first all the endeavours of mankind that professed an open enmity against it have been utterly frustrate. And whereas also those unto whom it was outwardly committed, as the Jews first, and the antichristian church of apostatized Christians afterward, not only fell into opinions and practices absolutely inconsistent with it, but also built all their present and future interests on those opinions and practices; yet none of them durst ever attempt the corrupting of one line in it, but were forced to attempt their own security, by a pretence of additional traditions, and keeping the book itself, as much as they durst, out of the hands and knowledge of all not engaged in the same interest with themselves. Whence could all this proceed but from the watchful care and power of divine Providence? And it is brutish folly not to believe, that what God doth so protect did originally proceed from himself, seeing it pleads and pretends so to do: for every wise man will take more care of a stranger, than a bastard falsely imposed on him unto his dishonour.

3. The *design of the whole*, and all the parts of it, hath an impress on it of divine *wisdom* and authority. And hereof there are two parts, first, *To reveal God unto men;* and, se-

condly, *To direct men to come unto the enjoyment of God.* That these are the only two great concerns of our nature, of any rational being, were easy to prove, but that it is acknowledged by all those with whom I treat. Now, never did any book or writing in the world, any single or joint endeavours of mankind, or invisible spirits, in the way of authority, give out a law, rule, guide, and light, for all mankind universally in both these, namely, the knowledge of God and ourselves, but this book only; and if any other, it may be, like the Alcoran, did pretend in the least thereunto, it quickly discovered its own folly, and exposed itself to the contempt of all wise and considerate men. The only question is, how it hath discharged itself in this design, for if it hath completely and perfectly accomplished it, it is not only evident that it must be from God, but also that it is the greatest benefit and kindness, that divine benignity and goodness ever granted unto mankind; for without it all men universally must necessarily wander in an endless maze of uncertainties, without ever attaining light, rest, or blessedness, here or hereafter. Wherefore,

(1.) As it takes on itself to speak in the *name and authority of God,* and delivers nothing, commands nothing, but what becomes his infinite holiness, wisdom, and goodness; so it makes that declaration of him in his nature, being, and subsistence, with the necessary properties and acts thereof, his will, with all his voluntary actings or works, wherein we may be or are concerned, so as that we may know him aright, and entertain true notions and apprehensions of him, according to the utmost capacity of our finite limited understanding. Neither do we urge his authority in this case, but here and elsewhere resort unto the evidence of his reasonings compared with the event or matter of fact. What horrible darkness, ignorance, and blindness, was upon the whole world, with respect unto the knowledge of God! What confusion and debasement of our nature ensued thereon; whilst God 'suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, and winked at the times of their ignorance,' the apostle declares at large, Rom. i. from the 19th verse to the end of the chapter. The sum is, that the only true God being become unknown to them, as the wisest of them acknowledged; Acts xvii. 21. and as our apostle proved against them; the devil, that 'mur-

derer from the beginning,' and enemy of mankind, had under various pretences substituted himself in his room, and was become the god of this world, as he is called, 2 Cor. iv. 4. and had appropriated all the religious devotion and worship of the generality of mankind unto himself; 'for the things which the Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed unto devils, and not unto God,' as our apostle affirms, 1 Cor. x 20. and as may easily be evinced; and I have abundantly manifested it elsewhere[b]. It is acknowledged that some few speculative men among the Heathen did seek after God in that horrid darkness wherewith they were encompassed, and laboured to reduce their conceptions and notions of his being, unto what reason could apprehend of infinite perfections, and what the works of creation and providence could suggest unto them; but as they never could come unto any certainty or consistency of notions in their own minds, proceeding but a little beyond conjecture, as in the manner of them who seek after them in the dark, much less with one another, to propose any thing unto the world for the use of mankind in these things by common consent; so they could none of them either ever free themselves from the grossest practical idolatry in worshipping the devil, the head of their apostacy from God; nor in the least influence the minds of the generality of mankind with any due apprehensions of the divine nature: this is the subject and substance of the apostle's disputation against them; Rom. i. In this state of things, what misery and confusion the world lived in for many ages, what an endless labyrinth of foolish, slavish superstitions and idolatries it had cast itself into, I have in another discourse particularly declared[c]. With respect hereunto, the Scripture is well called by the apostle Peter, a 'light shining in a dark place;' 2 Pet. i. 19. It gives unto all men, at once a perfect, clear, steady, uniform declaration of God; his being, subsistence, properties, authority, rule, and actings, which evidenceth itself unto the minds and consciences of all whom the god of this world hath not absolutely blinded by the power of prejudices and lusts, confirming them in an enmity unto, and hatred of, God himself. There is, indeed, no more required to free mankind

[b] De Natura Theologiæ, lib. ii. cap. 1. sect. 11.
[c] Ubi supra de origine et progressu idolatriæ.

from this horrible darkness, and enormous conceptions about the nature of God, and the worship of idols, but a sedate unprejudiced consideration of the revelation of these things in the book of the Scripture. We may say, therefore, to all the world, with our prophet, 'When they say unto you, Seek unto them who have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law, and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them;' Isa. viii. 19, 20. And this, also, plainly manifests the Scripture to be of a divine original. For if this declaration of God, this revelation of himself and his will, is incomparably the greatest and most excellent benefit that our nature is capable of in this world, more needful for, and more useful unto, mankind than the sun in the firmament, as to the proper end of their lives and beings; and if none of the wisest men in the world, neither severally nor jointly, could attain unto themselves, or make known unto others, this knowledge of God, so that we may say with our apostle, that 'in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God;' 1 Cor. i. 21. And whereas those who attempted any such things, yet 'waxed vain in their imaginations' and conjectures, so that no one person in the world dares own the regulation of his mind and understanding by their notions and conceptions absolutely, although they had all advantages of wisdom, and the exercise of reason above those, at the least the most of them, who wrote and published the books of the Scripture; it cannot, with any pretence of reason, be questioned, whether they were not given by inspiration from God, as they pretend and plead. There is that done in them which all the world could not do, and without the doing whereof all the world must have been eternally miserable, and who could do this but God? If any one shall judge, that that ignorance of God, which was among the Heathens of old, or is among the Indians at this day, is not so miserable a matter as we make it; or that there is any way to free them from it, but by an emanation of light from the Scripture, he dwells out of my present way upon the confines of atheism; so that I shall not divert unto any converse with him: I shall only add, that whatever notions of truth concerning God and his essence, there may be found in those

philosophers who lived after the preaching of the gospel in the world, or are at this day to be found among the Mahometans, or other false worshippers in the world, above those of the more ancient Pagans, they all derive from the fountain of the Scripture, and were thence by various means traduced.

(2.) The second end of this doctrine is to *direct mankind in their proper course of living unto God,* and attaining that rest and blessedness whereof they are capable, and which they cannot but desire. These things are necessary to our nature, so that without them it were better not to be; for it is better to have no being in the world, than, whilst we have it, always to wander, and never to act towards its proper end; seeing all that is really good unto us consists in our tendency thereunto, and our attainment of it. Now as these things were never stated in the minds of the community of mankind, but that they lived in perpetual confusion; so the inquiries of the philosophers about the chief end of man, the nature of felicity or blessedness, the ways of attaining it, are nothing but so many uncertain and fierce digladiations, wherein not any one truth is asserted nor any one duty prescribed, that is not spoiled and vitiated by its circumstances and ends; besides, they never rose up so much as to a surmise of or about the most important matters of religion, without which it is demonstrable by reason, that it is impossible we should ever attain the end for which we are made, or the blessedness whereof we are capable. No account could they ever give of our apostacy from God, of the depravation of our nature, of the cause, or necessary cure of it. In this lost and wandering condition of mankind the Scripture presenteth itself as a light, rule, and guide unto all, to direct them in their whole course unto their end, and to bring them unto the enjoyment of God; and this it doth with that clearness and evidence as to dispel all the darkness, and put an end unto all the confusions, of the minds of men, as the sun with rising doth the shades of the night, unless they wilfully shut their eyes against it, 'loving darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' For all the confusion of the minds of men to extricate themselves from, whence they found out and immixed themselves in endless questions to no purpose, arose from their ignorance of what we were

originally, of what we now are, and how we came so to be, by what way or means we may be delivered or relieved, what are the duties of life, or what is required of us in order to our living to God as our chiefest end, and wherein the blessedness of ournature doth consist: all the world was never ab to give an answer tolerably satisfactory unto any one of these inquiries, and yet unless they are all infallibly determined, we are not capable of the least rest or happiness above the beasts that perish. But now all these things are so clearly declared and stated in the Scripture, that it comes with an evidence like a light from heaven on the minds and consciences of unprejudiced persons. What was the condition of our nature in its first creation and constitution, with the blessedness and advantage of that condition; how we fell from it, and what was the cause, what is the nature, and what the consequences and effects, of our present depravation and apostacy from God; how help and relief is provided for us herein by infinite wisdom, grace, and bounty; what that help is, how we may be interested in it, and made partakers of it; what is that system of duties, or course of obedience unto God, which is required of us, and wherein our eternal felicity doth consist; are all of them so plainly and clearly revealed in the Scripture, as, in general, to leave mankind no ground for doubt, inquiry, or conjecture: set aside inveterate prejudices from tradition, education, false notions into the mould whereof the mind is cast, the love of sin, and the conduct of lust, which things have an inconceivable power over the minds, souls, and affections of men; and the light of the Scripture in these things is like that of the sun at noon-day, which shuts up the way unto all farther inquiry, and efficaciously necessitates unto an acquiescency in it. And, in particular, in that direction which it gives unto the lives of men, in order unto that obedience which they owe to God, and that reward which they expect from him, there is no instance conceivable of any thing conducing thereunto, which is not prescribed therein, nor of any thing which is contrary unto it, that falls not under its prohibition. Those, therefore, whose desire or interest it is, that the bounds and differences of good and evil should be unfixed and confounded, who are afraid to know what they were, what they are, or what they shall come unto; who care to know nei-

ther God nor themselves, their duty nor their reward, may despise this book, and deny its divine original: others will retain a sacred veneration of it, as of the offspring of God.

4. The *testimony of the church* may in like manner be pleaded unto the same purpose: and I shall also insist upon it, partly to manifest wherein its true nature and efficacy doth consist, and partly to evince the vanity of the old pretence, that even we also, who are departed from the church of Rome, do receive the Scripture upon the authority thereof; whence it is farther pretended, that on the same ground and reason we ought to receive whatever else it proposeth unto us.

1. The church is said to be the *ground and pillar of truth;* 1 Tim. iii. 15. Which is the only text pleaded, with any sobriety, to give countenance unto the assertion of the authority of the Scripture with respect unto us, to depend on the authority of the church. But the weakness of a plea to that purpose from hence hath been so fully manifested by many already, that it needs no more to be insisted on. In short, it cannot be so the ground and pillar of truth, that the truth should be, as it were, built and rest upon it as its foundation; for this is directly contrary to the same apostle, who teacheth us, that the church itself is built upon the 'foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;' Eph. ii. 20. The church cannot be the ground of truth, and truth the ground of the church, in the same sense or kind. Wherefore, the church is the ground and pillar of truth, in that it holds up and declares the Scriptures, and the things contained therein, so to be.

2. In receiving any thing from a church, we may consider the *authority* of it, or its *ministry*. By the authority of the church in this matter we intend no more but the weight and importance that is in its testimony, as testimonies do vary according to the worth, gravity, honesty, honour, and reputation of them by whom they are given. For to suppose an authority, properly so called, in any church, or all the churches of the world, whereon our reception of the Scripture should depend, as that which gives its authority towards us, and a sufficient warranty to our faith, is a nice imagination: for the authority and truth of God stand not

in need, nor are capable of, any such attestation from men; all they will admit of from the children of men is, that they do humbly submit unto them, and testify their so doing with the reasons of it. The ministry of the church in this matter is that duty of the church, whereby it proposeth and declareth the Scripture to be the word of God, and that as it hath occasion to all the world. And this ministry also, may be considered either formally, as it is appointed of God unto this end, and blessed by him; or materially, only as the thing is done, though the grounds whereon it is done, and the manner of doing it, be not divinely approved.

We wholly deny that we receive the Scripture, or ever did, on the authority of the church of Rome in any sense whatever, for the reasons that shall be mentioned immediately. But it may be granted, that, together with the ministry of other churches in the world, and many other providential means of their preservation, and successive communication, we did *de facto* receive the Scriptures by the ministry of the church of Rome also, seeing they also, were in the possession of them: but this ministry we allow only in the latter sense, as an actual means in subserviency unto God's providence, without respect unto any especial institution.

And for the authority of the church in this case, in that sense wherein it is allowed, namely, as denoting the weight and importance of a testimony, which, being strengthened by all sorts of circumstances, may be said to have great authority in it, we must be careful unto whom or what church we grant or allow it. For let men assume what names or titles to themselves they please, yet if the generality of them be corrupt or flagitious in their lives, and have great secular advantages, which they highly prize and studiously improve, from what they suppose and profess the Scripture to supply them withal, be they called church, or what you please, their testimony therein is of very little value; for all men may see that they have an earthly wordly interest of their own therein. And it will be said, that if such persons did know the whole Bible to be a fable (as one pope expressed himself to that purpose) they would not forego the profession of it, unless they could more advantage themselves in the world another way. Wherefore, whereas it is manifest

unto all, that those who have the conduct of the Roman church have made, and do make to themselves, great earthly temporal advantages, in honour, power, wealth, and reputation in the world, by their profession of the Scripture, their testimony may rationally be supposed to be so far influenced by self-interest, as to be of little validity.

The testimony, therefore, which I intend, is that of multitudes of persons of unspotted reputation on all other accounts in the world, free from all possibility of impeachment as unto any designed evil or conspiracy among themselves with respect unto any corrupt end, and who having not the least secular advantage by what they testified unto, were absolutely secured against all exceptions, which either common reason or common usage among mankind can put in unto any witness whatever. And to evidence the force that is in this consideration, I shall briefly represent, 1. *Who* they were that gave and do give this *testimony*, in some especial instances. 2. *What* they gave this *testimony* unto. 3. *How*, or by what means, they did so.

And in the first place, the testimony of those by whom the several books of the Scripture were written, is to be considered: they all of them severally and jointly witnessed, that *what* they wrote was received by *inspiration from God.* This is pleaded by the apostle Peter in the name of them all; 2 Pet. i. 16—21. 'For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also, a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' This is the concurrent testimony of the writers both of the Old Testament and the New; namely, that as they have certain knowledge of

the things they wrote, so their writing was by inspiration from God. So, in particular, John beareth witness unto his revelations; chap. xix. 9. xxii. 6. 'These are the true and faithful sayings of God.' And what weight is to be laid hereon, is declared, John xxi. 24. 'This is that disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.' He testified the truth of what he wrote; but how was it known to the church there intended ('we know that his testimony is true'), that so it was indeed? He was not absolutely *αὐτόπιστος*, or one that was to be believed in merely on his own account; yet here it is spoken in the name of the church with the highest assurance; 'and we know that his testimony is true.' I answer: this assurance of theirs did not arise merely from his moral or natural endowments or holy counsels, but from the evidence they had of his divine inspiration, whereof we shall treat afterward.

The things pleaded to give force unto this testimony in particular, are all that such a testimony is capable of, and so many as would require a large discourse by itself to propose, discuss, and confirm them. But supposing the testimony they gave, I shall in compliance with my own design reduce the evidences of its truth unto these two considerations: (1.) Of their *persons;* and, (2.) Of the *manner* of their writing.

(1.) As to their *persons*, they were absolutely removed from all possible suspicion of deceiving or being deceived. The wit of all the atheistical spirits in the world is not able to fix on any one thing, that would be a tolerable ground of any such suspicion concerning the integrity of witnesses, could such a testimony be given in any other case. And surmises in things of this nature which had no pleadable ground for them, are to be looked on as diabolical suggestions, or atheistical dreams, or at best the false imaginations of weak and distempered minds. The nature and design of their work, their unconcernment with all secular interests, their unacquaintance with one another, the times and places wherein the things reported by them were done and acted, the facility of convincing them of falsehood, if what they wrote in matter of fact, which is the fountain of what else they taught, in case it were not true, the evident certainty that this

would have been done, arising from the known desire, ability, will, and interest, of their adversaries so to do, had it been possible to be effected, seeing this would have secured them the victory in the conflicts wherein they were violently engaged, and have put an immediate issue unto all that difference and uproar that was in the world about their doctrine; their harmony among themselves without conspiracy or antecedent agreement, the miseries which they underwent, most of them without hope of relief or recompense in this world, upon the sole account of the doctrine taught by themselves, with all other circumstances innumerable, that are pleadable to evince the sincerity and integrity of any witnesses whatever, do all concur to prove that they did not follow cunningly devised fables, in what they declared concerning the mind and will of God as immediately from himself. To confront this evidence with bare surmises, incapable of any rational countenance or confirmation, is only to manifest what brutish impudence, infidelity, and atheism, are forced to retreat unto for shelter.

(2.) Their *style* and *manner* of writing deserves a peculiar consideration. For there are impressed on it all those characters of a divine original, that can be communicated unto such an outward adjunct of divine revelation. Notwithstanding the distance of the ages and seasons wherein they lived, the difference of the languages wherein they wrote, with the great variety of their parts, abilities, education, and other circumstances, yet there is upon the whole, and all the parts of their writing, that gravity, majesty, and authority, mixed with plainness of speech, and absolute freedom from all appearance of affectation of esteem or applause, or any things else that derive from human frailty, as must excite an admiration in all that seriously consider them. But I have at large elsewhere insisted on this consideration[d]. And have also in the same place shewed, that there is no other writing extant in the world, that ever pretended unto a divine original, as the apocryphal books under the Old Testament, and some fragments of spurious pieces pretended to be written in the days of the apostles; but they are, not only from their matter, but from the manner of their writing, and the plain footsteps of human artifice and weakness therein, sufficient for

[d] Exercitat. on the Epist. to the Heb. Exer. 1.

their own conviction, and do openly discover their own vain pretensions. So must every thing necessarily do, which being merely human, pretends unto an immediate derivation from God. When men have done all they can, these things will have as evident a difference between them, as there is between wheat and chaff, between real and painted fire; Jer. xxiii. 28, 29.

2. Unto the testimony of the divine writers themselves, we must add, that of those who in all ages have *believed in Christ through their word*, which is the description which the Lord Jesus Christ giveth of his church; John xvii. 20. This is the church, that is, those who wrote the Scripture; and those who believe in Christ, through their word, through all ages, which beareth witness to the divine original of the Scripture, and it may be added, that we know this witness is true. With these I had rather venture my faith and eternal condition, than with any society, any real or pretended church whatever. And among these there is an especial consideration to be had of those innumerable multitudes who in the primitive times witnessed this confession all the world over. For they had many advantages above us, to know the certainty of sundry matters of fact which the verity of our religion depends upon. And we are directed unto an especial regard of their testimony, which is signalized by Christ himself. In the great judgment that is to be passed on the world, the first appearance is of the souls of them that were beheaded for 'the witness of Jesus Christ, and for the word of God;' Rev. xx. 4. And there is at present an especial regard unto them in heaven, upon the account of their witness and testimony; Rev. vi. 9—11. These were they who with the loss of their lives by the sword, and other ways of violence, gave testimony unto the truth of the word of God. And to reduce these things unto a natural consideration, who can have the least occasion to suspect all those persons of folly, weakness, credulity, wickedness, or conspiracy among themselves, which such a diffused multitude was absolutely incapable of? Neither can any man undervalue their testimony, but he must comply with their adversaries against them, who were known generally to be of the worst of men. And who is there that believes there is a God, and an eternal future state, that had

not rather have his soul with Paul than Nero, with the holy martyrs than their bestial persecutors? Wherefore, this suffrage and testimony, begun from the first writing of the Scripture, and carried on by the best of men in all ages, and made conspicuously glorious in the primitive times of Christianity, must needs be with all wise men unavoidably cogent, at least unto a due and sedate consideration of what they bare witness unto, and sufficient to scatter all such prejudices as atheism or profaneness may raise or suggest.

Secondly, *What* it was they gave *testimony* unto is duly to be considered. And this was not that the book of the Scripture was good, holy, and true, in all the contents of it only, but that the whole and every part of it was given by *divine inspiration*, as their faith in this matter is expressed; 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. On this account, and no other, did they themselves receive the Scripture, as also believe and yield obedience unto the things contained in it. Neither would they admit that their testimony was received, if the whole world would be content to allow of, or obey, the Scripture on any other, or lower terms. Nor will God himself allow of an assent unto the Scripture under any other conception, but as the word which is immediately spoken by himself. Hence, they who refuse to give credit thereunto, are said to 'belie the Lord, and say, It is not he;' Jer. v. 12. Yea, to make 'God a liar;' 1 John v. 10. If all mankind should agree together to receive and make use of this book, as that which taught nothing but what is good, useful, and profitable to human society; as that which is a complete directory unto men in all that they need to believe or do towards God; the best means under heaven to bring them to settlement, satisfaction, and assurance of the knowledge of God and themselves; as the safest guide to eternal blessedness; and, therefore, must needs be written and composed by persons, wise, holy, and honest, above all comparison, and such as had that knowledge of God and his will as is necessary unto such an undertaking, yet all this answers not the testimony given by the church of believers in all ages unto the Scriptures. It was not lawful for them, it is not for us, so to compound this matter with the world. That the whole Scripture was given by inspiration from God, that it was his word, his true

and faithful sayings, was that which, in the first place, they gave testimony unto, and we also are obliged so to do. They never pretended unto any other assurance of the things they professed, nor any other reason of their faith and obedience, but that the Scripture wherein all these things are contained was given immediately from God, or was his word. And, therefore, they were always esteemed no less traitors to Christianity, who gave up their Bibles to persecutors, than those who denied Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, The *manner wherein* this testimony was given, adds to the importance of it. For, 1. many of them, especially in some seasons, gave it in, and with sundry *miraculous operations.* This our apostle pleadeth as a corroboration of the witness given by the first preachers of the gospel unto the truths of it; Heb. ii. 4. as the same was done by all the apostles together; Acts v. 32. It must be granted, that these miracles were not wrought immediately to confirm this single truth, that the Scripture was given by inspiration of God. But the end of miracles is to be an immediate witness from heaven, or God's attestation to their persons and ministry by whom they were wrought. His presence with them, and approbation of their doctrine, were publicly declared by them. But the miracles wrought by the Lord Christ and his apostles, whereby God gave immediate testimony unto the divine mission of their persons, and infallible truth of their doctrine, might either not have been written as most of them were not, or they might have been written, and their doctrine recorded in books not given by inspiration from God. Besides, as to the miracles wrought by Christ himself, and most of those of the apostles, they were wrought among them by whom the books of the Old Testament were acknowledged as the oracles of God, and before the writing of those of the New; so that they could not be wrought in the immediate confirmation of the one or the other. Neither have we any infallible testimony concerning these miracles, but the Scripture itself, wherein they are recorded: whence it is necessary that we should believe the Scripture to be infallibly true, before we can believe on grounds infallible, the miracles therein recorded to be so. Wherefore, I grant that the whole force of this consideration lieth in this alone, that those who gave testimony to the

Scripture to be the word of God, had an attestation given unto their ministry by these miraculous operations; concerning which we have good collateral security also.

2. Many of them confirmed their testimony with their *sufferings*, being not only witnesses but *martyrs* in the peculiar *church notion* of that word, grounded on the Scripture; Acts xxii. 20. Rev. ii. 13. xvii. 7. So far were they from any worldly advantage by the profession they made, and the testimony they gave, as that in the confirmation of them they willingly and cheerfully underwent whatever is evil, dreadful, or destructive to human nature in all its temporary concerns. It is, therefore, unquestionable that they had the highest assurance of the truth in these things which the mind of man is capable of. The management of this argument is the principal design of the apostle in the whole 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. For having declared the nature of faith in general, namely, that it is the 'subsistence of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;' ver. 1. That is, such an assent unto, and confidence of, invisible things, things capable of no demonstration from sense or reason, as respects divine revelation only, whereinto alone it is resolved: for our encouragement thereunto, and establishment therein, he produceth a long catalogue of those who did, suffered, and obtained great things thereby. That which he principally insists upon is the hardships, miseries, cruelties, tortures, and several sorts of deaths which they underwent; especially from ver. 35. to the end. These he calleth a 'cloud of witnesses,' wherewith 'we are compassed about;' chap. xii. 1. giving testimony unto what we do believe, that is, divine revelation; and in an especial manner the promises therein contained, unto our encouragement in the same duty, as he there declares. And certainly what was thus testified unto by so many great, wise, and holy persons, and that in such a way and manner, hath as great an outward evidence of its truth, as any thing of that nature is capable of in this world.

3. They gave not their testimony *casually*, or on some *extraordinary occasion* only, or by some *one solemn act*, or in some *one certain way*, as other testimonies are given, nor can be given otherwise; but they gave their testimony in this cause, in their whole course, in all that they *thought, spake,*

or *did,* in the world, and in the whole disposal of their ways, lives, and actions, as every true believer continueth to do at this day. For a man when he is occasionally called out to give a *verbal testimony* unto the divine original of the Scripture, ordering in the mean time the whole course of his conversation, his hopes, designs, aims, and ends, without any eminent respect or regard unto it, his testimony is of no value, nor can have any influence on the minds of sober and considerate men. But when men do manifest and evince, that the declaration of the mind of God in the Scripture, hath a sovereign divine authority, over their souls and consciences, absolutely and in all things, then is their witness cogent and efficacious. There is to me a thousand times more force and weight in the testimony to this purpose of some holy persons, who universally, and in all things with respect unto this world, and their future eternal condition, in all their thoughts, words, actions, and ways, do really experiment in themselves, and express to others, the power and authority of this word of God, in their souls and consciences, living, doing, suffering, and dying in peace, assurance of mind, and consolation thereon, than in the verbal declaration of the most splendid numerous church in the world, who evidence not such an inward sense of its power and efficacy. There is, therefore, that force in the real testimony, which hath been given in all ages, by all this sort of persons, not one excepted, unto the divine authority of the Scripture, that it is highly arrogant for any one to question the truth of it, without evident convictions of its imposture, which no person of any tolerable sobriety did ever yet pretend unto.

I shall add, in the last place, the consideration of that *success,* which the *doctrine* derived solely from the Scripture, and resolved thereinto, hath had in the world upon the minds and lives of men, especially upon the *first preaching* of the gospel. And two things offer themselves hereon immediately unto our consideration: 1. The *persons* by whom this doctrine was successfully carried on in the world; and, 2. The *way* and *manner* of the propagation of it. Both which the Scripture takes notice of in particular, as evidences of that *divine power* which the word was really accompanied withal. For the persons unto whom this work was committed, I mean the apostles and first evangelists,

were, as to their outward condition in the world, poor, low, and every way despised; and as unto the endowments of their minds, destitute of all those abilities and advantages, which might give them either reputation or probability of success in such an undertaking. This the Jews marked in them with contempt; Acts iv. 13. And the Gentiles also generally despised them on the same account. As they afforded our apostle no better title than that of a babbler; Acts xvii. 18. So for a long time they kept up the public vogue in the world, that Christianity was the religion of ideots, and men illiterate. But God had another design in this order of things, which our apostle declares upon an admission of the inconsiderable meanness of them, unto whom the dispensation of the gospel was committed; 2 Cor. iv. 7. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.' The reason why God would make use of such instruments only in so great a work was, that through their meanness his own glorious power might be more conspicuous. There is nothing more common among men, nor more natural unto them, than to admire the excellencies of those of their own race and kind, and a willingness to have all evidences of a divine supernatural power, clouded and hidden from them. If, therefore, there had been such persons employed, as instruments in this work, whose powers, abilities, qualifications, and endowments, might have been probably pretended as sufficient, and the immediate causes of such an effect, there would have been no observation of the divine power or glory of God. But he who is not able to discern them in the bringing about of so mighty a work, by means so disproportionate thereunto, is under the power of the unrelievable prejudices intimated by our apostle in this case; 2 Cor. iv. 4, 5. 7.

2. The *means* which were to be used unto this end, namely, the *subduing of the world* unto the faith and obedience of the gospel, so erecting the spiritual kingdom of Christ in the minds of men, who before were under the power and dominion of his adversary, must either be *force* and *arms;* or *eloquence,* in plausible persuasive reasonings. And mighty works have been wrought by the one and the other of them. By the former have empires been set up and established in the world; and the superstition of Mahomet

imposed on many nations. And the latter also hath had great effects on the minds of many. Wherefore, it might have been expected, that those who had engaged themselves in so great a design and work as that mentioned, should betake themselves unto the one or other of these means and ways; for the wit of man cannot contrive any way unto such an end, but what may be reduced unto one of these two; seeing neither upon the principles of nature, nor on the rules of human wisdom or policy, can any other be imagined. But even both these ways were abandoned by them, and they declared against the use of either of them. For as outward force, power, and authority, they had none, the use of all carnal weapons being utterly inconsistent with this work and design, so the other way of persuasive orations, of enticing words, of alluring arts and eloquence, with the like effects of human wisdom and skill, were all of them studiously declined by them in this work, as things extremely prejudicial to the success thereof; 1 Cor. ii 4, 5. But this alone they betook themselves unto; they went up and down preaching to Jews and Gentiles, 'that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and rose again according to the Scriptures;' 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. And this they did by virtue of those spiritual gifts, which were the hidden powers of the world to come, whose nature, virtue, and power, others were utterly unacquainted withal. This preaching of theirs, this preaching of the cross, both for the subject, matter, and manner of it, without art, eloquence, or oratory, was looked on as a marvellous, foolish, thing, a sweaty kind of babbling, by all those who had got any reputation of learning or cunning amongst men. This our apostle at large discourseth, 1 Cor. i. In this state of things, every thing was under as many improbabilities of success, unto all rational conjectures, as can be conceived. Besides, together with the doctrine of the gospel that they preached, which was new and uncouth unto the world, they taught observances of religious worship in meetings, assemblies, or conventicles, to that end, which all the laws in the world did prohibit; Acts xviii. 13. xvi. 21. Hereupon, no sooner did the rulers and governors of the world begin to take notice of them, and what they did, but they judged that it all tended to sedition, and that commotions would ensue thereon. These things enraged the generality of mankind

against them and their converts, who therefore made havoc of them with incredible fury. And yet notwithstanding all these disadvantages, and against all these oppositions, their doctrine prevailed to subdue the world to the obedience thereof. And there may be added unto all these things, one or two considerations, from the state of things at that time in the world, which signalize the quality of this work, and manifest it to have been of God.

As, 1. That in the New Testament the writers of it do constantly distribute all those with whom they had to do in this world, into *Jews* and *Greeks,* which we render *Gentiles,* the other nations of the world coming under that denomination, because of their pre-eminence on various accounts. Now the Jews at that time were *in solidum,* possessed of all the true religion that was in the world ; and this they boasted of as their privilege, bearing up themselves with the thoughts and reputation of it every where and on all occasions; it being at that time their great business to gain proselytes unto it, whereon also their honour and advantage did depend. The Greeks, on the other side, were in as full a possession of arts, sciences, literature, and all that which the world calls wisdom, as the Jews were of religion; and they had also a religion, received by a long tradition of their fathers from time immemorial, which they had variously cultivated and dressed with mysteries and ceremonies, unto their own complete satisfaction. Besides, the Romans, who were the ruling part of the Gentiles, did ascribe all their prosperity, and the whole raising of their stupendous empire, to their gods, and the religious worship they gave unto them; so that it was a fundamental maxim in their policy and rule, that they should prosper or decay, according as they observed or were negligent in the religion they received. As, indeed, not only those who owned the true God and his providence, but before idolatry and superstition had given place unto atheism, all people did solemnly impute all their achievements and successes unto their gods, as the prophet speaks of the Chaldeans; Mal. i. 11. And he who first undertook to record the exploits of the nations of the world, doth constantly assign all their good and evil unto their gods, as they were pleased or provoked. The Romans, in especial, boasted that their religion was the cause of their prosperity; 'Pietate et religione

atque hâc una sapientia, quòd deorum immortalium numine omnia regi gubernarique prospeximus, omnes gentes nationesque superamus,' says their great oracle, Orat. de Har. Resp. And Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a great and wise historian, giving an account of the religion of the Romans, and the ceremonies of their worship, affirms, that he doth it unto this end, 'that those who have been ignorant of the Roman piety, should cease to wonder at their prosperity and successes, in all their wars, seeing by reason of their religion, they had the gods always propitious and succourable unto them.' Antiq. Rom. lib. 2. The consideration hereof, made them so obstinate in their adherence unto their present religion, that when after many ages and hundreds of years, some books of Numa their second king, and principal establisher of their commonwealth, were occasionally found, instead of paying them any respect, they ordered them to be burnt, because one who had perused them, took his oath that they were contrary to their present worship and devotion. And this was that, which upon the declension of their empire, after the prevalency of the Christian religion, those who were obstinate in their Paganism, reflected severely upon the Christians; the relinquishment of their old religion, they fiercely avowed to be the cause of all their calamities. In answer unto which calumny, principally, Austin wrote his excellent discourse, De Civitate Dei.

In this state of things the preachers of the gospel come among them, and not only bring a new doctrine, under all the disadvantages before mentioned, and, moreover, that he who was the head of it was newly crucified by the present powers of the earth, for a malefactor, but, also, such a doctrine as was expressly to take away the religion from the Jews, and the wisdom from the Greeks, and the principal maxim of polity from the Romans, whereon they thought they had raised their empire. It were easy to declare how all those sects were engaged in worldly interest, honour, reputation, principles of safety, to oppose, decry, condemn, and reject this new doctrine. And if a company of sorry craftsmen were able to fill a whole city with tumult and uproar against the gospel, as they did when they apprehended it would bring in a decay of their trade; Acts xix. what can we think was done in all the world, by all those who were engaged

and enraged by higher provocations? It was as death to the Jews to part with their religion, both on the account of the conviction they had of its truth, and the honour they esteemed to accrue to themselves thereby. And for the Greeks to have all that wisdom, which they and their forefathers had been labouring in for so many generations, now to be all rejected as an impertinent foolery by the sorry preachments of a few illiterate persons; it raised them unto the highest indignation. And the Romans were wise enough to secure the fundamental maxim of their state. Wherefore, the world seemed very sufficiently fortified against the admission of this new and strange doctrine, on the terms whereon it was proposed. There can be no danger sure that ever it should obtain any considerable progress: but we know that things fell out quite otherwise; religion, wisdom, and power, with honour, profit, interest, reputation, were forced all to give way to its power and efficacy.

2. The world was at that time in the highest enjoyment of *peace, prosperity*, and *plenty*, that ever it attained from the entrance of sin; and it is known how from all these things are usually made *provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*. Whatever the pride, ambition, covetousness, sensuality of any persons could carry them forth to lust after, the world was full of satisfactions for. And most men lived as in the eager pursuit of their lusts, so in a full supply of what they did require. In this condition the gospel is preached unto them, requiring at once, and that indispensably, a renunciation of all those worldly lusts, which before had been the salt of their lives. If men designed any compliance with it, or interest in it, all their pride, ambition, luxury, covetousness, sensuality, malice, revenge, must all be mortified and rooted up. Had it only been a new doctrine and religion, declaring that knowledge and worship of God which they never heard of before, they could not but be very wary in giving it entertainment; but when withal it required at the first instant, that for its sake they should 'pull out their right eyes, and cut off their right hands,' to part with all that was dear and useful unto them, and which had such a prevalent interest in their minds and affections, as corrupt lusts are known to have; this could not but invincibly fortify them against its admittance. But yet this also was forced to

give place, and all the fortifications of Satan therein was by the power of the word cast to the ground, as our apostle expresseth it; 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Where he gives an account of that warfare, whereby the world was subdued to Christ by the gospel. Now a man, that hath a mind to make himself an instance of conceited folly and pride, may talk as though there was in all this no evidence of divine power giving testimony to the Scripture, and the doctrine contained in it, but the characters of it are so legible unto every modest and sedate prospect, that they leave no room for doubt or hesitation.

But the force of the whole argument is liable unto one exception of no small moment, which must, therefore, necessarily be taken notice of, and removed. For, whereas we plead the power, efficacy, and prevalency of the gospel in former days, as a demonstration of its divine original, it will be inquired, Whence it is, that it is not still accompanied with the same power, nor doth produce the same effects. For we see the profession of it is now confined to narrow limits, in comparison of what it formerly extended itself unto; neither do we find that it gets ground any where in the world, but is rather more and more straitened every day. Wherefore, either the first prevalency that is asserted unto it, and argued as an evidence of its divinity, did indeed proceed from some other accidental causes, in an efficacious, though unseen, concurrence, and was not by an emanation of power from itself; or the gospel is not at present what it was formerly, seeing it hath not the same effect upon, or power over, the minds of men, as that had of old. We may, therefore, suspend the pleading of this argument from what was done by the gospel formerly, lest it reflect disadvantage upon what we profess at present.

Ans. 1. Whatever *different events* may fall out in *different seasons*, yet the gospel is the same as ever it was from the beginning. There is not another book, containing another doctrine, crept into the world instead of that once delivered unto the saints. And whatever various apprehensions men may have, through their weakness or prejudices, concerning the things taught therein, yet are they in themselves absolutely the same that ever they were, and that without the loss or change of a material word or syllable in the manner

of their delivery. This I have proved elsewhere, and it is a thing capable of the most evident demonstration. Wherefore, whatever entertainment this gospel meets withal at present in the world, its former prevalency may be pleaded in justification of its divine original.

2. The *cause of this event lieth principally in the sovereign will and pleasure of God.* For although the Scripture be his word, and he hath testified it so to be by his power, put forth and exerted in dispensations of it unto men, yet is not that divine power included or shut up in the letter of it, so that it must have the same effect wherever it comes. We plead not that there is absolutely in itself, its doctrine, the preaching or preachers thereof, such a power, as it were naturally and physically to produce the effects mentioned. But it is an instrument in the hand of God unto that work which is his own, and he puts forth his power in it, and by it, as it seems good unto him. And if he doth at any time so put forth his divine power in the administration of it, or in the use of this instrument, as that the great worth and excellency of it shall manifest itself to be from him, he giveth a sufficient attestation of it. Wherefore, the times and seasons of the prevalency of the gospel in the world, are in the hand and at the sovereign disposal of God. And as he is not obliged ('for who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?') to accompany it with the same power at all times and seasons; so the evidence of his own power going along with it, at any time, whilst under an open claim of a divine original, is an uncontrollable approbation of it. Thus, at the first preaching of the word, to fulfil the promises made unto the fathers from the foundation of the world, to glorify his Son Jesus Christ, and the gospel itself which he had revealed, he put forth that effectual divine power in its administration, whereby the world was subdued unto the obedience of it. And the time will come when he will revive the same work of power and grace to retrieve the world into a subjection to Jesus Christ. And although he doth not in these latter ages cause it to run and prosper among the nations of the world, who have not as yet received it, as he did formerly, yet considering the state of things at present among the generality of mankind, the preservation of it in that small remnant by whom it is obeyed

in sincerity, is a no less glorious evidence of his presence with it, and care over it, than was its eminent propagation in days of old.

3. The *righteousness of God* is in like manner to be considered in these things. For, whereas he had granted the inestimable privilege of his word unto many nations, they, through their horrible ingratitude and wickedness, detained the truth in unrighteousness; so that the continuance of the gospel among them was no way to the glory of God, no nor yet unto their own advantage. For neither nations nor persons will ever be advantaged by an outward profession of the gospel, whilst they live in a contradiction and disobedience to its precepts; yea, nothing can be more pernicious to the souls of men. This impiety God is at this day revenging on the nations of the world, having utterly cast off many of them from the knowledge of the truth, and given up others unto 'strong delusions, to believe lies,' though they retain the Scriptures and outward profession of Christianity. How far he may proceed in the same way of righteous vengeance towards other nations also, we know not, but ought to tremble in the consideration of it. When God first granted the gospel unto the world, although the generality of mankind had greatly sinned against the light of nature, and had rejected all those supernatural revelations that at any time had been made unto them; yet had they not sinned against the gospel itself, nor the grace thereof. It pleased God, therefore, to wink at, and pass over, that time of their ignorance, so as that his justice should not be provoked by any of their former sins, to withhold the efficacy of his divine power in the administration of the gospel from them, whereby he 'called them to repentance.' But now, after that the gospel hath been sufficiently tendered unto all nations, and hath, either as unto its profession, or as unto its power, with the obedience that it requires, been rejected by the most of them; things are quite otherwise stated. It is from the 'righteous judgment of God,' revenging the sins of the world against the gospel itself, that so many nations are deprived of it, and so many left obstinate in its refusal. Wherefore, the present state of things doth no way weaken or prejudice the evidence given unto the Scripture by that mighty power of God, which accompanied the administration of it in the

world. For what hath since fallen out, there are secret reasons of sovereign wisdom, and open causes in divine justice, whereunto it is to be assigned.

These things I have briefly called over, and not as though they were all of this kind that may be pleaded, but only to give some *instance* of those *external arguments* whereby the divine authority of the Scripture may be confirmed.

Now these arguments are such as are able of themselves to beget in the minds of men, sober, humble, intelligent, and unprejudiced, a firm opinion, judgment, and persuasion, that the Scripture doth proceed from God. Where persons are prepossessed with invincible prejudices contracted by a course of education, wherein they have imbibed principles opposite and contrary thereunto, and have increased and fortified them by some fixed and hereditary enmity against all those whom they know to own the divinity of the Scripture, as it is with Mahometans, and some of the Indians; these arguments, it may be, will not prevail immediately to work nor effect their assent. It is so with respect unto them, also, who out of love unto, and delight in, those ways of vice, sin, and wickedness, which are absolutely and severely condemned in the Scripture, without the least hope of a dispensation unto them that continue under the power of them, who will not take these arguments into due consideration. Such persons may talk and discourse of them, but they never weigh them seriously according as the importance of the cause doth require. For if men will examine them as they ought, it must be with a sedate judgment, that their eternal condition depends upon a right determination of this inquiry. But for those who can scarce get liberty from the service and power of their lusts, seriously to consider what is their condition, or what it is like to be; it is no wonder if they talk of these things after the manner of these days, without any impression on their minds and affections, or influence on the practical understanding. But our inquiry is after, what is a sufficient evidence for the conviction of rational and unprejudiced persons, and the defeating of objections to the contrary, which these and the like arguments do every way answer.

Some think fit here to stay, that is, in these or the like external arguments, or rational *motives of faith*, such as render

the Scriptures so credible, as that it is an unreasonable thing not to assent unto them. That *certainty* which may be attained on these arguments and motives, is, as they say, the highest which our minds are capable of with respect unto this object, and, therefore, includes all the *assent* which is required of us unto this proposition, that the Scriptures are the word of God; or all the faith whereby we believe them so to be. When I speak of these arguments, I intend not them *alone* which I have insisted on, but all others also of the same kind, some whereof have been urged and improved by others with great diligence, for in the variety of such arguments as offer themselves in this cause, every one chooseth out what seems to him most cogent, and some amass all that they can think on. Now these arguments, with the evidence tendered in them are such, as nothing but *perverse prejudice* can detain men from giving a *firm assent* unto. And no more is required of us, but that according to the *motives* that are proposed unto us, and the *arguments* used to that purpose, we come unto a judgment and persuasion, called a *moral assurance* of the truth of the Scripture, and endeavour to yield obedience unto God accordingly.

And it were to be wished that there were more than it is feared there are, who were really so affected with these arguments and motives. For the truth is, *tradition* and *education* practically bear the whole sway in this matter. But yet when all this is done, it will be said, that all this is but a *mere natural work*, whereunto no more is required, but the *natural exercise* and acting of our *own reason* and understanding; that the arguments and motives used, though strong, are *human* and *fallible*, and, therefore, the conclusion we make from them is so also, and wherein we may be deceived; that an assent grounded and resolved into such *rational arguments* only, is not *faith* in the sense of the Scripture; in brief, that it is required that we *believe the Scriptures to be the word of God with faith divine and supernatural*, which cannot be deceived. Two things are replied hereunto.

1. That *where the things believed are divine and supernatural, so is the faith whereby we believe them, or give our assent unto them.* Let the motives and arguments whereon we give our assent be of what kind they will, so that the assent be true and real, and the things believed be divine and supernatural,

the faith whereby we believe is so also. But this is all one as if, in things natural, a man should say, our sight is green when we see that which is so, and blue when we see that which is blue. And this would be so in things moral, if the specification of acts were from their material objects; but it is certain that they are not of the same nature always with the things they are conversant about, nor are they changed thereby from what their nature is in themselves, be it natural or supernatural, human or divine. Now, things divine are only the material object of our faith, as hath been shewed before; and by an enumeration of them do we answer unto the question, What is it that you do believe? But it is the formal object or reason of all our acts from whence they are denominated, or by which they are specified. And the formal reason of our faith, assent, or believing, is that which prevails with us to believe, and on whose account we do so, wherewith we answer unto that question, Why do you believe? If this be human authority, arguments highly probable, but absolutely fallible, motives cogent, but only to beget a moral persuasion, whatever we do believe thereon, our faith is human, fallible, and a moral assurance only. Wherefore it is said,

2. That this *assent* is sufficient, all that is required of us, and contains in it all the *assurance* which our minds are capable of in this matter. For no farther evidence nor assurance is in any case to be inquired after than the subject matter will bear. And so is it in this case, where the truth is not exposed to sense, nor capable of a scientifical demonstration, but must be received upon such reasons and arguments, as carry it above the highest probability, though they leave it beneath science or knowledge, or infallible assurance; if such a persuasion of mind there be.

But yet I must needs say, that although those external arguments, whereby learned and rational men have proved or may yet farther prove the Scripture to be a divine revelation given of God, and the doctrine contained in it to be a heavenly truth, are of singular use for the strengthening of the faith of them that do believe, by relieving the mind against temptations and objections that will arise to the contrary, as also for the conviction of gainsayers; yet to say, that they contain the formal reason of that assent, which

is required of us unto the Scripture as the word of God, that our faith is the effect and product of them, which it rests upon and is resolved into, is both contrary to the Scripture, destructive of the nature of divine faith, and exclusive of the work of the Holy Ghost in this whole matter.

Wherefore, I shall do these two things before I proceed to our principal argument designed: 1. I shall give some few reasons, proving that the faith whereby we believe the Scripture to be the *word* of God is not a mere firm moral persuasion, built upon external arguments and motives of credibility; but is divine and supernatural, because the *formal reason* of it is so also. 2. I shall shew what is the *nature of that faith*, whereby we do or ought to believe the Scripture to be the *word* of God; what is the work of the Holy Spirit about it, and what is the proper object of it. In the first I shall be very brief, for my design is to strengthen the faith of all, and not to weaken the opinions of any.

Divine revelation is the proper object of *divine faith*. With such faith we can believe nothing but what is so, and what is so can be received no otherwise by us. If we believe it not with divine faith, we believe it not at all. Such is the Scripture as the word of God every where proposed unto us; and we are required to believe, that is, first to believe it so to be, and then to believe the things contained in it. For this proposition, that the Scripture is the word of God, is a divine revelation, and so to be believed. But God no where requires, nor ever did, that we should believe any divine revelation upon such grounds, much less on such grounds and motives only. They are left unto us as consequential unto our believing, to plead with others in behalf of what we profess, and for the justification of it unto the world. But that which he requires our faith and obedience unto, in the receiving of divine revelations, whether immediately given and declared, or as recorded in the Scripture, is his own authority and veracity; 'I am the Lord, the high and lofty one.' 'Thus saith the Lord.' 'To the law and to the testimony.' 'This is my Son, hear him.' 'All Scripture is given by inspiration from God.' 'Believe the Lord and his prophets.' This alone is that which he requires us to resolve our faith into. So, when he gave unto us the law of our lives, the eternal and unchangeable rule of our obedience unto him in the ten command-

ments, he gives no other reason to oblige us thereunto, but this only, 'I am the Lord thy God.' The sole formal reason of all our obedience is taken from his own nature and our relation unto him. Nor doth he propose any other reason why we should believe him, or the revelation which he makes of his mind and will. And our faith is part of our obedience, the root and principal part of it; therefore, the reason of both is the same. Neither did our Lord Jesus Christ nor his apostles ever make use of such arguments or motives for the ingenerating of faith in the minds of men; nor have they given directions for the use of any such arguments to this end and purpose. But when they were accused to have followed 'cunningly devised fables,' they appealed unto Moses and the prophets, to the revelations they had themselves received, and those that were before recorded. It is true they wrought miracles in confirmation of their own divine mission, and of the doctrine which they taught. But the miracles of our Saviour were all of them wrought amongst those who believed the whole Scripture then given to be the word of God; and those of the apostles were before the writings of the books of the New Testament. Their doctrine, therefore, materially considered, and their warranty to teach it, was sufficiently, yea, abundantly confirmed by them. But divine revelation formally considered, and as written, was left upon the old foundation of the authority of God who gave it. No such method is prescribed, no such example is proposed unto us in the Scripture, to make use of these arguments and motives for the conversion of the souls of men unto God, and the ingenerating of faith in them. Yea, in some cases the use of such means is decryed as unprofitable, and the sole authority of God, putting forth his power in and by his word, is appealed unto; 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. 13. xiv. 26, 27. 2 Cor. iv. 7. But yet, in a way of preparation subservient unto the receiving the Scripture as the word of God, and for the defence of it against gainsayers and their objections, their use hath been granted and proved. But from first to last in the Old and New Testament, the authority and truth of God are constantly and uniformly proposed as the immediate ground and reason of believing his revelations; nor can it be proved that he doth accept or approve of any kind of faith or assent, but what is built thereon and resolved thereinto. The sum is,

we are obliged in a way of duty, to believe the Scriptures to be a divine revelation, when they are ministerially or providentially proposed unto us, whereof afterward. The ground whereon we are to receive them is the authority and veracity of God speaking in them; we believe them because they are the word of God. Now this faith, whereby we so believe, is divine and supernatural, because the formal reason of it is so, namely, God's truth and authority. Wherefore, we do not, nor ought to, believe the Scripture as highly probable, or with a moral persuasion and assurance built upon arguments absolutely fallible, and human only. For if this be the formal reason of faith, namely, the veracity and authority of God, if we believe not with faith divine and supernatural, we believe not at all.

2. The *moral certainty* treated of, is a mere effect of reason. There is no more required unto it, but that the reasons proposed for the assent required, be such as the mind judgeth to be convincing and prevalent; whence an inferior kind of knowledge, or a firm opinion, or some kind of persuasion which hath not yet gotten an intelligible name, doth necessarily ensue. There is, therefore, on this supposition, no need of any work of the Holy Ghost, to enable us to believe, or to work faith in us; for no more is required herein but what necessarily ariseth from a naked exercise of reason. If it be said, that the inquiry is not about what is the work of the Spirit of God in us; but concerning the reasons and motives to believing that are proposed unto us. I answer, it is granted; but that we urge herein is, that the act which is exerted on such motives, or the persuasion which is begotten in our minds by them, is purely natural, and such as requires no especial work of the Holy Ghost in us for the effecting of it. Now this is not faith, nor can we be said in the Scripture sense to believe thereby, and so, in particular, not the Scriptures to be the word of God. For 'faith is the gift of God, and is not of ourselves;' Eph. ii. 8. 'It is given unto some on the behalf of Christ,' Phil. i. 29. and not unto others; Matt. xi. 29. xiii. 11. But this assent on external arguments and motives is of ourselves, equally common and exposed unto all. 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;' 1 Cor. xii. 3. But he who believeth the Scripture truly, aright, and according to his duty, doth say

so. 'No man cometh to Christ, but he that hath heard and learned of the Father;' John vi. 45. And as this is contrary to the Scripture, so it is expressly condemned by the ancient church; particularly by the second Arausican council; Can. 5. 7. 'Si quis sicut augmentum ita etiam initium fidei, ipsumque credulitatis affectum, non per gratiæ donum, id est, per inspirationem Spiritus Sancti, corrigentem voluntatem nostram ab infidelitate ad fidem, ab impietate ad pietatem, sed naturalitèr nobis inesse dicit, apostolicis dogmatibus adversarius approbatur.' And plainly, Can. 7. 'Si quis per naturæ vigorem bonum aliquod quod ad salutem pertinet vitæ eternæ cogitare ut expedit, aut eligere, sive salutari, id est, evangelicæ prædicationi consentire posse affirmat absque illuminatione et inspiratione Spiritus Sancti, qui dat omnibus suavitatem consentiendo et credendo veritati, hæretico fallitur spiritu.'

It is still granted that the arguments intended (that is, all of them which are true indeed, and will endure a strict examination, for some are frequently made use of in this cause which will not endure a trial) are of good use in their place and unto their proper end; that is, to beget such an assent unto the truth as they are capable of effecting. For although this be not that which is required of us in a way of duty, but inferior to it, yet the mind is prepared and disposed by them unto the receiving of the truth in its proper evidence.

3. Our assent can be of no other nature than the arguments and motives whereon it is built, or by which it is wrought in us, as in *degree* it cannot exceed their *evidence*. Now these arguments are all human and fallible; exalt them unto the greatest esteem possible, yet because they are not demonstrations, nor do necessarily beget a certain knowledge in us (which indeed if they did, there were no room left for faith or our obedience therein), they produce an opinion only, though in the highest kind of probability, and firm against objections. For we will allow the utmost assurance that can be claimed upon them. But this is exclusive of all divine faith as to any article, thing, matter, or object, to be believed. For instance; a man professeth that he believes Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. Demand the reason why he doth so, and he will say, Because God who cannot lie, hath revealed and declared him so to be; proceed

yet farther, and ask him, Where or how God hath revealed and declared this so to be? and he will answer, in the Scripture, which is his word; inquire now farther of him, which is necessary, Wherefore he believes this Scripture to be the word of God, or an immediate revelation given out from him? for hereunto we must come and have somewhat that we may ultimately rest in, excluding in its own nature all farther inquiries, or we can have neither certainty, nor stability in our faith. On this supposition his answer must be, that he hath many cogent arguments that render it highly probable so to be, such as have prevailed with him to judge it so to be, and whereon he is fully persuaded, as having the highest assurance whereof that the matter will bear, and so doth firmly believe them to be the word of God. Yea, but it will be replied, all these arguments are in their kind or nature human, and therefore fallible, such as it is possible they may be false; for every thing may be so that is not immediately from the first essential verity. This assent, therefore, unto the Scriptures as the word of God is human, fallible, and such as wherein we may be deceived. And our assent unto the things revealed, can be of no other kind than that we give unto the revelation itself. For thereinto it is resolved, and thereunto it must be reduced; these waters will rise no higher than their fountain. And thus at length we come to believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, with a faith human and fallible, and which at last may deceive us; which is to 'receive the word of God as the word of men, and not as it is in truth the word of God,' contrary to the apostle; 1 Thess. ii. 13. Wherefore,

4. If I believe the Scripture to be the *word* of God with a human faith only, I do no otherwise believe whatever is contained in it, which overthrows all faith properly so called. And if I believe whatever is contained in the Scripture with faith divine and supernatural, I cannot but by the same faith believe the Scripture itself, which removes the moral certainty treated of out of our way. And the reason of this is, that we must believe the revelation, and the things revealed with the same kind of faith, or we bring confusion on the whole work of believing. No man living can distinguish in his experience between that faith, wherewith he believes the Scripture, and that wherewith he believes the

doctrine of it, or the things contained in it; nor is there any such distinction or difference intimated in the Scripture itself; but all our believing is absolutely resolved into the authority of God revealing. Nor can it be rationally apprehended that our assent unto the things revealed, should be of a kind and nature superior unto that which we yield unto the revelation itself. For let the arguments which it is resolved into be never so evident and cogent, let the assent itself be as firm and certain as can be imagined, yet is it human still and natural, and therein is inferior unto that which is divine and supernatural. And yet on this supposition that which is of a superior kind and nature is wholly resolved into that which is of an inferior, and must betake itself on all occasions thereunto for relief and confirmation. For the faith whereby we believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, is on all occasions absolutely melted down into that whereby we believe the Scriptures to be the word of God.

But none of these things are my present especial design, and therefore I have insisted long enough upon them. I am not inquiring what grounds men may have to build an opinion, or any kind of human persuasion upon, that the Scriptures are the word of God, no nor yet how we may prove or maintain them so to be unto gainsayers; but what is required hereunto that we may believe them to be so with faith divine and supernatural, and what is the work of the Spirit of God therein.

But it may be farther said, that these external arguments and motives are not of themselves, and considered separately from the doctrine which they testify unto, the sole ground and reason of our believing. For if it were possible that a thousand arguments of a like cogency with them were offered to confirm any truth or doctrine, if it had not a divine worth and excellency in itself, they could give the mind no assurance of it. Wherefore, it is the truth itself, or doctrine contained in the Scripture, which they testify unto, that animates them and gives them their efficacy. For there is such a majesty, holiness, and excellency, in the doctrine of the gospel, and, moreover, such a suitableness in them unto unprejudiced reason, and such an answerableness unto all the rational desires and expectations of the soul, as evi-

dence their procedure from the fountain of infinite wisdom and goodness. It cannot but be conceived impossible that such excellent, heavenly mysteries, of such use and benefit unto all mankind, should be the product of any created industry. Let but a man know himself, his state and condition, in any measure, with a desire of that blessedness which his nature is capable of, and which he cannot but design; when the Scripture is proposed unto him in the ministry of the church, attested by the arguments insisted on, there will appear unto him in the truths and doctrines of it, or in the things contained in it, such an evidence of the majesty and authority of God, as will prevail with him to believe it to be a divine revelation. And this persuasion is such, that the mind is established in its assent unto the truth, so as to yield obedience unto all that is required of us. And, whereas our belief of the Scripture is in order only to the right performance of our duty, or all that obedience which God expecteth from us, our minds being guided by the precepts and directions, and duly influenced by the promises and threatenings of it thereunto, there is no other faith required of us but what is sufficient to oblige us unto that obedience.

This being, so far as I can apprehend, the substance of what is by some learned men proposed and adhered unto, it shall be briefly examined. And I say here, as on other occasions, that I should rejoice to see more of such a faith in the world, as would effectually oblige men unto obedience, out of a conviction of the excellency of the doctrine, and the truth of the promises and threatenings of the word, though learned men should never agree about the formal reason of faith. Such notions of truth when most diligently inquired into, are but as sacrifice compared with obedience. But the truth itself is also to be inquired after diligently.

This opinion, therefore, either supposeth what we shall immediately declare, namely, the *necessity* of an internal effectual work of the Holy Spirit, in the *illumination of our minds,* so enabling us to believe with faith *divine and supernatural,* or it doth not. If it doth, it will be found, as I suppose, for the substance of it, to be coincident with what we shall afterward assert, and prove to be the *formal reason* of believing. However, as it is usually proposed, I cannot

absolutely comply with it, for these two reasons among others.

1. It belongs unto the nature of faith, of what sort soever it be, that it be built on and resolved into *testimony*. This is that which distinguisheth it from any other conception, knowledge, or assent of our minds, on other reasons and causes. And if this testimony be divine, so is that faith whereby we give assent unto it, on the part of the object. But the doctrines contained in the Scripture, or the subject matter of the truth to be believed, have not in them the nature of a testimony, but are the material, not formal objects of faith, which must always differ. If it be said that these truths or doctrines do so evidence themselves to be from God, as that in and by them we have the witness and authority of God himself proposed unto us, to resolve our faith into, I will not farther contend about it; but only say, that the authority of God, and so his veracity, do manifest themselves primarily in the revelation itself, before they do so in the things revealed, which is that we plead for.

2. The *excellency of the doctrine*, or things revealed in the Scriptures, respects not so much the truth of them in speculation, as their goodness and suitableness unto the souls of men, as to their present condition and eternal end. Now things under that consideration respect not so much faith, as spiritual sense and experience. Neither can any man have a due apprehension of such a goodness suitable unto our constitution and condition, with absolute usefulness in the truth of the Scripture, but on a supposition of that antecedent assent of the mind unto them, which is believing; which, therefore, cannot be the reason why we do believe.

But if this opinion proceed not upon the aforesaid supposition (immediately to be proved), but requires no more unto our satisfaction in the truth of the Scripture and assent thereon, but the due exercise of reason, or the natural faculties of our minds about them when proposed unto us, then I suppose it to be most remote from the truth, and that amongst many other reasons, for these that ensue.

1. On this supposition, the whole *work of believing* would be a work of *reason*. Be it so, say some, nor is it meet it should be otherwise conceived. But if so, then the object of it must be things so evident in themselves and their own

nature, as that the mind is, as it were, compelled by that evidence unto an assent, and cannot do otherwise. If there be such a light and evidence in the things themselves with respect unto our reason in the right use and exercise of it, then is the mind thereby necessitated unto its assent; which both overthrows the nature of faith, substituting an assent upon natural evidence in the room thereof, and is absolutely exclusive of the necessity or use of any work of the Holy Ghost in our believing, which sober Christians will scarcely comply withal.

2. There are *some doctrines* revealed in the Scripture, and those of the most importance that are so revealed, which concern and contain things so *above our reason,* that without some previous supernatural dispositions of mind, they carry in them no evidence of truth unto mere reason, nor of suitableness unto our constitution and end. There is required unto such an apprehension, both the spiritual elevation of the mind by supernatural illumination, and a divine assent unto the authority of the revelation thereon, before reason can be so much as satisfied in the truth and excellency of such doctrines. Such are those concerning the Holy Trinity, or the subsistence of one singular essence in three distinct persons, the incarnation of the Son of God, the resurrection of the dead, and sundry other that are the most proper subjects of divine revelation. There is a heavenly glory in some of these things, which as reason can never thoroughly apprehend, because it is finite and limited, so as it is in us by nature, it can neither receive them, nor delight in them, as doctrinally proposed unto us, with all the aids and assistance before mentioned. Flesh and blood reveals not these things unto our minds, but our Father which is in heaven. Nor doth any man know these mysteries of the kingdom of God, but he 'unto whom it is given;' nor do any learn these things aright, but those that are taught of God.

3. Take our reason singly, without the consideration of divine *grace* and *illumination,* and it is not only weak and limited, but depraved and corrupted. And the carnal mind cannot subject itself unto the authority of God in any supernatural revelation whatever. Wherefore, the truth is, that the doctrines of the gospel, which are purely and absolutely so, are so far from having a convincing evidence in

themselves of their divine truth, excellency, and goodness, unto the reason of men as unrenewed by the Holy Ghost, as that they are foolishness and most undesirable unto it, as I have elsewhere proved at large. We shall, therefore, proceed.

There are two things considerable with respect unto our believing the Scriptures to be the word of God in a due manner, or according to our duty. The first respects the *subject*, or the *mind of man*, how it is enabled thereunto; the other the *object* to be believed, with the true reason why we do believe the Scripture with faith divine and supernatural.

The first of these must of necessity fall under our consideration herein, as that without which, whatever reasons, evidences, or motives, are proposed unto us, we shall never believe in a due manner. For whereas the mind of man, or the minds of all men, are by *nature depraved, corrupt, carnal,* and *enmity against God;* they cannot of themselves, or by virtue of any innate ability of their own, understand or assent unto spiritual things in a spiritual manner, which we have sufficiently proved and confirmed before. Wherefore, that *assent* which is wrought in us by mere external arguments, consisting in the rational conclusion and judgment which we make upon their truth and evidence, is not that faith wherewith we ought to believe the word of God.

Wherefore, that we may believe the Scriptures to be the word of God according to our duty, as God requireth it of us, in a useful, profitable, and saving manner, above and beyond that *natural human faith* and assent which is the effect of the arguments and motives of credibility, before insisted on, with all others of the like kind, *there is, and must be wrought in us by the power of the Holy Ghost, faith supernatural and divine, whereby we are enabled so to do, or rather whereby we do so.* This work of the Spirit of God, as it is distinct from, so in order of nature it is antecedent unto, all *divine objective evidence* of the Scriptures being the word of God, or the formal reason moving us to believe it; wherefore, without it, whatever arguments or motives are proposed unto us, we cannot believe the Scriptures to be the word of God in a due manner, and as it is in duty required of us.

Some, it may be, will suppose these things *ἀπροσδιόννσα,* and impertinent unto our present purpose. For while we are

inquiring on what *grounds* we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, we seem to *fly to the work of the Holy Ghost* in our own minds, which is irrational. But we must not be ashamed of the gospel, nor of the truth of it, because some do not understand, or will not duly consider, what is proposed. It is necessary, that we should return unto the work of the Holy Spirit, not with peculiar respect unto the Scriptures that are to be believed, but unto our own minds and that faith wherewith they are to be believed. For it is not the reason why we believe the Scriptures, but the power whereby we are enabled so to do, which at present we inquire after.

1. That the *faith* whereby we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, is *wrought in us by the Holy Ghost*, can be denied only on two principles or suppositions. (1.) That it is not *faith divine and supernatural* whereby we believe them so to be, but only we have other moral assurance thereof. (2.) That this *faith divine and supernatural* is of ourselves, and is not wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. The first of these hath been already disproved, and shall be farther evicted afterward; and, it may be, they are very few who are of that judgment. For, generally, whatever men suppose the prime object, principal motive, and *formal reason* of that faith to be, yet that it is divine and supernatural they all acknowledge. And as to the second, what is so, it is of the operation of the Spirit of God. For to say it is *divine and supernatural*, is to say that it is *not of ourselves*, but that it is the grace and gift of the Spirit of God, wrought in us by his divine and supernatural power. And those of the church of Rome, who would resolve our faith in this matter *objectively* into the authority of their church, yet *subjectively* acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit ingenerating faith in us, and that work to be necessary to our believing the Scripture in a due manner. 'Externæ omnes et humanæ persuasiones non sunt satis ad credendum, quantumcunque ab hominibus competenter ea quæ sunt fidei proponantur. Sed necessaria est insuper causa interior, hoc est divinum quoddam lumen incitans ad credendum, et oculi quidam interni Dei beneficio ad videndum dati,' saith Canus, Loc. Theol. lib. 2. cap. 8. Nor is there any of the divines of that church which dissent herein. We do not, therefore, assert any such divine formal reason of believing, as that the

mind should not stand in need of supernatural assistance enabling it to assent thereunto. Nay we affirm, that without this there is in no man any true faith at all, let the arguments and motives whereon he believes be as forcible and pregnant with evidence as can be imagined. It is in this case as in things natural; neither the light of the sun, nor any persuasive arguments unto men to look up unto it, will enable them to discern it, unless they are endued with a due visive faculty.

And this the Scripture is express in beyond all possibility of contradiction. Neither is it that I know of, by any as yet in express terms denied. For, indeed, that all which is *properly called faith*, with respect unto divine revelation, and is accepted with God as such, is the work of the Spirit of God in us, or is bestowed on us by him, cannot be questioned by any who own the gospel. I have also proved it elsewhere so fully and largely as that I shall give it at present no other confirmation, but what will necessarily fall in with the description of the nature of that faith whereby we do believe, and the way or manner of its being wrought in us.

The work of the Holy Ghost unto this purpose consists in the saving *illumination* of the mind, and the effect of it is a *supernatural light*, whereby the mind is renewed; see Rom. xii. 1. Eph. i. 18, 19. iii. 16—19. It is called a 'heart to understand, eyes to see, ears to hear;' Deut. xxix. 4. The 'opening of the eyes of our understanding;' Eph. i. 18. The 'giving of an understanding;' 1 John v. 20. Hereby we are enabled to discern the evidences of the divine original and authority of the Scripture that are in itself, as well as assent unto the truth contained it; and without it we cannot do so. For the 'natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' 1 Cor. ii. 14. And unto this end it is written in the prophets, 'that we shall be all taught of God;' John vi. 45. That there is a divine and heavenly excellency in the Scripture, cannot be denied by any, who on any grounds or motives whatever do own its divine original. For all the works of God do set forth his praise, and it is impossible that any thing should proceed immediately from him, but that there will be express characters of divine excellencies upon it; and as to the com-

munication of these characters of himself, he hath 'magnified his word above all his name.' But these we cannot discern, be they in themselves never so illustrious, without the effectual communication of the light mentioned unto our minds; that is, without divine supernatural illumination.

Herein 'he who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shineth into our hearts the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ;' 2 Cor. iv. 6. He irradiates the mind with a spiritual light, whereby it is enabled to discern the glory of spiritual things: this they cannot do 'in whom the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them;' ver. 6. Those who are under the power of their natural darkness and blindness, especially where there are in them also superadded prejudices begotten and increased by the craft of Satan, as there are in the whole world of unbelievers, cannot see nor discern that divine excellency in the Scripture, without an apprehension whereof no man can believe it aright to be the word of God. Such persons may assent unto the truth of the Scripture and its divine original, upon external arguments and rational motives, but believe it with faith divine and supernatural on those arguments and motives only, they cannot.

There are two things which hinder or disenable men from believing with faith divine and supernatural, when any divine revelation is objectively proposed unto them. First, The *natural blindness and darkness of their minds*, which are come upon all by the fall, and the depravation of our nature that ensued thereon. Secondly, The *prejudices* that through the crafts of Satan, the god of this world, their minds are possessed with, by *traditions, educations, and converse* in the world. This last obstruction or hinderance may be so far removed by external arguments and motives of credibility, as that men may upon them attain unto a moral persuasion concerning the divine original of the Scripture. But these arguments cannot remove or take away the native blindness of the mind, which is removed by their renovation and divine illumination alone. Wherefore none, I think, will positively affirm that we can believe the Scripture to be the word of God, in the way and manner which God requireth, without

a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit upon our minds in the illumination of them; so David prays that 'God would open his eyes, that he might behold wondrous things out of the law;' Psal. cxix. 10. That 'he would make him understand the way of his precepts;' ver. 27. That 'he would give him understanding and he should keep the law:' ver. 34. So the Lord Christ also 'opened the understandings of his disciples, that they might understand the Scriptures;' Luke xxiv. 45. As he had affirmed before that it was 'given unto some to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,' and not unto others; Matt. xi. 25. xiii. 11. And neither are these things spoken in vain, nor is the grace intended in them needless.

The communication of this light unto us the Scripture calleth *revealing* and *revelation;* Matt. xi. 25. 'Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes;' that is, giving them to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven when they were preached unto them. 'And no man knoweth the Father but he to whom the Son revealeth him;' ver. 27. So the apostle prayeth for the Ephesians, 'that God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that the eyes of their understandings being enlightened, they might know,' &c. chap. i. 17—19. It is true, these Ephesians were already believers, or considered by the apostle as such; but if he judged it necessary to pray for them, that they might have 'the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to enlighten the eyes of their understanding,' with respect unto farther degrees of faith and knowledge; or, as he speaks in another place, 'that they might come unto the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God;' Col. ii. 2. Then it is much more necessary to make them believers, who before were not so, but utter strangers unto the faith.

But as a pretence hereof hath been abused, as we shall see afterward, so the pleading of it is liable to be mistaken. For some are ready to apprehend, that this retreat unto a *Spirit of revelation,* is but a pretence to discard all rational arguments, and to introduce *enthusiasm* into their room. Now although the charge be grievous, yet because it is groundless, we must not forego what the Scripture plainly affirms and instructs us in, thereby to avoid it. Scripture testimo-

nies may be expounded according to the analogy of faith, but denied or despised, seem they never so contrary unto our apprehension of things, they must not be. Some, I confess, seem to disregard both the objective work of the Holy Spirit in this matter, whereof we shall treat afterward, and his subjective work also in our minds, that all things may be reduced unto sense and reason. But we must grant that a 'Spirit of wisdom and revelation' to open the eyes of our understanding, is needful to enable us to believe the Scripture to be the word of God in a due manner, or forego the gospel. And our duty it is to pray continually for that Spirit, if we intend to be established in the faith thereof.

But yet we plead not for *external immediate revelations*, such as were granted unto the prophets, apostles, and other penmen of the Scripture. The revelation we intend differs from them, both in its *especial subject and formal reason*, or nature, that is, in the whole kind. For, (1.) the subject matter of divine *prophetical revelation*, by a *θεόπνευστία*, or *immediate divine inspiration*, are things not made known before. Things they were, 'hid in God,' or the counsels of his will, 'and revealed unto the apostles and prophets by the Spirit;' Eph. ii. 5. 9, 10. Whether they were doctrines or things, they were at least, as unto their present circumstances, made known from the counsels of God by their revelation. But the matter and subject of the revelation we treat of, is nothing but what is already revealed. It is an internal revelation of that which is outwardly and antecedent unto it, beyond the bounds thereof it is not to be extended. And if any pretend unto *immediate revelations* of things not before revealed, we have no concernment in their pretences. (2.) They differ likewise in their nature or kind. For *immediate, divine, prophetical revelation* consisted in an immediate inspiration, or *afflatus*, or in visions and voices from heaven, with a power of the Holy Ghost *transiently* affecting their minds, guiding their tongues and hands to whom they were granted, whereby they received and represented divine impressions, as an instrument of music doth the skill of the hand whereby it is moved; the nature of which revelation I have more fully discoursed elsewhere. But this *revelation of the Spirit* consists in his effectual operation, freeing our minds from darkness, igno-

rance, and prejudice, enabling them to discern spiritual things, in a due manner. And such a *Spirit of revelation* is necessary unto them who would believe aright the Scripture, or any thing else that is divine and supernatural contained therein. And if men, who through the power of temptations and prejudices are in the dark, or at a loss as to the great and fundamental principle of all religion, namely, the divine original and authority of the Scripture, will absolutely lean unto their own understandings, and have the whole difference determined by the natural power and faculties of their own souls, without seeking after *divine aid and assistance*, or earnest prayer for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to open the eyes of their understandings, they must be content to abide in their uncertainties, or to come off from them without any advantage to their souls. Not that I would deny unto men, or take them off from the use of their reason in this matter; for what is their reason given unto them for, unless it be to use it in those things which are of the greatest importance unto them? Only I must crave leave to say, that it is not sufficient of itself to enable us to the performance of this duty, without the immediate aid and assistance of the Holy Spirit of God.

If any one, upon these principles, shall now ask us, *Wherefore we believe the Scripture to be the word of God?* We do not answer, It is *because the Holy Ghost hath enlightened our minds, wrought faith in us, and enabled us to believe it.* Without this we say indeed, did not the Spirit of God so work in us, and upon us, we neither should nor could believe with faith divine and supernatural. If God had not opened the heart of Lydia, she would not have attended unto the things preached by Paul so as to have received them; and without it the light oftentimes shines into darkness, but the darkness comprehends it not. But this neither is, nor can be, the *formal object of our faith*, or the reason why we believe the Scripture to be of God, or any thing else; neither do we, nor can we, rationally answer by it unto this question, *Why we do believe.* This reason must be something external and evidently proposed unto us. For whatever ability of spiritual assent there be in the understanding which is thus wrought in it by the Holy Ghost, yet the understanding cannot assent unto any thing with any kind of assent natural

or supernatural, but what is outwardly proposed unto it as true, and that with sufficient evidence that it is so. That therefore, which proposeth any thing unto us as true, with evidence of that truth, is the formal object of our faith, or the reason why we do believe. And what is so proposed must be evidenced to be true, or we cannot believe it; and according to the nature of that evidence such is our faith; human if that be human, and divine if that be so. Now nothing of this is done by that saving light which is infused into our minds, and is, therefore, not the reason why we believe what we do so.

Whereas, therefore, some, who seem to conceive that the only *general ground* of *believing the Scripture* to be the *word* of God doth consist in *rational arguments* and *motives of credibility*, do grant that private persons may have their assurance hereof from the illumination of the Holy Ghost, though it be not pleadable to others; they grant what is not, that I know of, desired by any, and which in itself is not true. For this work consisting solely in enabling the mind unto that kind of assent which is faith divine and supernatural, on supposition of an external formal reason of it duly proposed, is not the reason why any do believe, nor the ground whereunto their faith is resolved.

It remains only that we inquire whether our faith in this matter be not resolved into an *immediate internal testimony of the Holy Ghost*, assuring us of the divine original and authority of the Scripture, distinct from the work of *spiritual illumination*, before described. For it is the common opinion of Protestant divines, that the *testimony of the Holy Ghost* is the ground whereon we believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, and in what sense it is so shall be immediately declared. But hereon are they generally charged by those of the church of Rome and others, that they resolve all the ground and assurance of faith into their own particular spirits, or the spirit of every one that will pretend thereunto. And this is looked upon as a sufficient warranty to reproach them with giving countenance unto *enthusiasms*, and exposing the minds of men to endless delusions. Wherefore, this matter must be a little farther inquired into. And,

By an *internal testimony of the Spirit*, an extraordinary *afflatus*, or new immediate revelation may be intended. Men

may suppose they have, or ought to have, an internal particular testimony that the Scripture is the word of God, whereby, and whereby alone, they may be infallibly assured that so it is. And this is supposed to be of the same nature with the revelation made unto the prophets and penmen of the Scripture; for it is neither an *external proposition* of truth, nor an *internal ability to assent* unto such a proposition. And besides these there is no divine operation in this kind, but an immediate *prophetical inspiration* or revelation. Wherefore, as such a revelation or immediate testimony of the Spirit is the only reason why we do believe, so it is that alone which our faith rests on and is resolved into.

This is that which is commonly imputed unto those who deny either the *authority of the church*, or any other *external arguments or motives of credibility*, to be the *formal reason* of our faith. Howbeit there is no one of them, that I know of, who ever asserted any such thing. And I do, therefore, deny that our faith is resolved into any such *private testimony*, immediate revelation or inspiration of the Holy Ghost. And that for the ensuing reasons.

1. Since the finishing of the canon of the Scripture, the church is not under that *conduct*, as to stand in need of such new extraordinary revelations. It doth indeed live upon the internal gracious operations of the Spirit, enabling us to understand, believe, and obey, the perfect complete revelation of the will of God already made, but new revelations it hath neither need nor use of. And to suppose them, or a necessity of them, not only overthrows the perfection of the Scripture, but also leaveth us uncertain whether we know all that is to be believed in order unto salvation, or our whole duty, or when we may do so. For it would be our duty to live all our days in expectation of new revelations, wherewith neither peace, assurance, nor consolation, are consistent.

2. Those who are to *believe*, will not be able on this supposition to secure themselves from *delusion*, and from being imposed on by the deceits of Satan. For this new revelation is to be tried by the Scripture, or it is not. If it be to be tried and examined by the Scripture, then doth it acknowledge a superior rule, judgment, and testimony, and so cannot be that which our faith is ultimately resolved into.

If it be exempted from that rule of trying the spirits, then, (1.) It must produce the *grant of this exemption*, seeing the rule is extended generally unto all things and doctrines that relate unto *faith* or obedience. (2.) It must declare what are the grounds and evidences of its own *αὐτοπιστία*, or self-credibility, and how it may be infallibly or assuredly distinguished from all delusions, which can never be done. And if any tolerable countenance could be given unto these things, yet we shall shew immediately that no such *private testimony*, though real, can be the formal object of faith, or reason of believing.

3. It hath so fallen out in the *providence of God*, that generally all who have given up themselves, in any things concerning faith or obedience, unto the *pretended conduct of immediate revelations*, although they have pleaded a respect unto the Scripture also, have been seduced into opinions and practices directly repugnant unto it. And this, with all persons of sobriety, is sufficient to discard this pretence.

But this *internal testimony of the Spirit*, is by others explained quite in another way. For they say, that besides the work of the Holy Ghost before insisted on, whereby he takes away our *natural blindness*, and enlightening our minds, enables us to discern the divine excellencies that are in the Scripture ; there is another internal efficiency of his, whereby we are moved, persuaded, and enabled to believe : hereby we are taught of God, so as that finding the glory and majesty of God in the word, our hearts do by an ineffable power assent unto the truth without any hesitation. And this work of the Spirit carrieth its own evidence in itself, producing an assurance above all human judgment, and such as stands in need of no farther arguments or testimonies ; this faith rests on and is resolved into. And this some learned men seem to embrace, because they suppose that the *objective evidence* which is given in the Scripture itself, is only moral, or such as can give only a moral assurance. Whereas, therefore, faith ought to be divine and supernatural, so must that be whereinto it is resolved, yea, it is so alone from the *formal reason* of it. And they can apprehend nothing in this work, that is immediately divine, but only this *internal testimony of the Spirit*, wherein God himself speaks unto our hearts.

But yet neither, as it is so explained, can we allow it to be the formal object of faith, nor that wherein it doth acquiesce. For,

1. It hath not the proper *nature of a divine testimony.* A divine work it may be, but a divine testimony it is not; but it is of the nature of faith, to be built on an external testimony. However, therefore, our minds may be established, and enabled to believe firmly and stedfastly, by an ineffable internal work of the Holy Ghost, whereof also we may have a certain experience; yet neither that work nor the effect of it, can be the reason why we do believe, nor whereby we are moved to believe, but only that whereby we do believe.

2. That which is the *formal object of faith,* or reason whereon we believe, is the same, *and common unto all that do believe.* For our inquiry is not how, or by what means, this or that man came *to believe,* but why any one or every one *ought so to do,* unto whom the Scripture is proposed. The object proposed unto all to be believed is the same; and the faith required of all in a way of duty is the same, or of the same kind and nature, and therefore the reason why we believe, must be the same also. But on this supposition, there must be as many distinct reasons of believing, as there are believers.

3. On this supposition, it cannot be the duty of any one to believe the Scripture to be the word of God, who hath not received this *internal testimony of the Spirit.* For where the true formal reason of believing is not proposed unto us, there it is not our duty to believe. Wherefore, although the Scripture be proposed as the word of God, yet is it not our duty to believe it so to be, until we have this work of the Spirit in our hearts, in case that be the formal reason of believing. But not to press any farther, how it is possible men may be deceived and deluded in their apprehensions of such an internal testimony of the Spirit, especially if it be not to be tried by the Scripture; which, if it be, it loseth its *αὐτοπιστία* or self-credibility, or if it be, it casteth us into a circle, which the Papists charge us withal; it cannot be admitted as the formal object of our faith, because it would divert us from that which is public, proper, every way certain and infallible.

However, that work of the Spirit, which may be called an

internal real testimony is to be granted, as that which belongs unto the stability and assurance of faith. For if he did no otherwise work in us, or upon us, but by the communication of spiritual light unto our minds, enabling us to discern the evidences that are in the Scripture of its own divine original, we should often be shaken in our assent, and moved from our stability. For whereas our spiritual darkness is removed but in part, and at best whilst we are here we see things but darkly, as in a glass, all things believed having some sort of inevidence or obscurity attending them; and whereas temptations will frequently shake and disturb the due respect of the faculty unto the object, or interpose mists and clouds between them, we can have no assurance in believing, unless our minds are farther established by the Holy Ghost. He doth, therefore, three ways assist us in believing, and ascertain our minds of the things believed, so as that we may hold fast the beginning of our confidence, firm and steadfast unto the end. For,

1. He gives unto believers a *spiritual sense* of the *power and reality of the things believed*, whereby their faith is greatly established. And although the divine witness, whereunto our faith is ultimately resolved, doth not consist herein, yet, it is the greatest corroborating testimony, whereof we are capable. This is that which brings us unto the 'riches of the full assurance of understanding;' Col. ii. 2. as also, 1 Thess. i. 5. And on the account of this spiritual experience, is our perception of spiritual things so often expressed by acts of sense, as tasting, seeing, feeling, and the like means of assurance in things natural. And when believers have attained hereunto, they do find the divine wisdom, goodness, and authority of God so present unto them, as that they need neither argument, nor motive, nor any thing else, to persuade them unto, or confirm them in, believing. And whereas this spiritual experience, which believers obtain through the Holy Ghost, is such as cannot rationally be contended about, seeing those who have received it, cannot fully express it, and those who have not, cannot understand it, nor the efficacy which it hath to secure and establish the mind; it is left to be determined on by them alone, who have their 'senses exercised to discern good and evil.' And this belongs unto the internal subjective testimony of the Holy Ghost.

2. He assists, helps, and relieves us, against *temptations to the contrary,* so as that they shall not be prevalent. Our first *prime assent,* unto the divine authority of the Scripture, upon its proper grounds and reasons, will not secure us against future objections and temptations unto the contrary, from all manner of causes and occasions. David's faith was so assaulted by them, as that he said in his haste, that all men were liars. And Abraham himself, after he had received the promise, that in his seed all nations should be blessed, was reduced unto that anxious inquiry, 'Lord God what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?' Gen. xv. 2. And Peter was so winnowed by Satan, that although his faith failed not, yet he greatly failed and fainted in its exercise. And we all know what fears from within, what fightings from without, we are exposed unto in this matter. And of this sort are all those atheistical objections against the Scripture, which these days abound withal; which the devil useth as fiery darts, to inflame the souls of men, and to destroy their faith; and indeed this is that work, which the powers of hell are principally engaged in at this day. Having lopped off many branches, they now lay their axe to the root of faith, and thence in the midst of the profession of Christian religion, there is no greater controversy, than whether the Scriptures are the word of God or not. Against all these temptations, doth the Holy Ghost, give in such a continual supply of spiritual strength and assistance unto believers, as that they shall at no time prevail, nor their faith totally fail. In such cases the Lord Christ intercedes for us, that our faith fail not, and God's grace is sufficient against the buffetings of these temptations. And herein the truth of Christ's intercession, with the grace of God, and its efficiency, are communicated unto us by the Holy Ghost. What are those internal aids, whereby he establisheth and assureth our minds, against the force and prevalency of objections and temptations against the divine authority of the Scripture, how they are communicated unto us, and received by us, this is no place to declare in particular. It is in vain for any to pretend unto the name of Christians, by whom they are denied. And these also have the nature of an internal real testimony, whereby faith is established.

And because it is somewhat strange, that after a long

quiet possession of the professed faith, and assent of the generality of the minds of men thereunto, there should now arise among us, such an open opposition unto the divine authority of the Scriptures, as we find there is by experience; it may not be amiss in our passage, to name the principal causes or occasions thereof: for if we should bring them all into one reckoning, as justly we may, who either openly oppose it and reject it, or who use it or neglect it at their pleasure, or who set up other guides in competition with it or above it, or otherwise declare that they have no sense of the immediate authority of God therein; we shall find them to be like the Moors or slaves, in some countries or plantations, they are so great in number and force above their rulers and other inhabitants, that it is only want of communication, with confidence, and some distinct interests, that keep them from casting off their yoke and restraint. I shall name three causes only of this surprising and perilous event.

1. A long continued *outward profession* of the truth of the Scripture, without an *inward experience of its power,* betrays men at length to question the truth itself, at least not to regard it as divine. The owning of the Scriptures to be the word of God bespeaks a divine majesty, authority, and power to be present in it and with it. Wherefore, after men, who have for a long time so professed, do find that they never had any real experience of such a divine presence in it by any effects upon their own minds, they grow insensibly regardless of it, or to allow it a very common place in their thoughts. When they have worn off the impressions that were on their minds from tradition, education, and custom, they do for the future rather not oppose it than in any way believe it. And when once a reverence unto the word of God on the account of its authority is lost, an assent unto it on the account of truth will not long abide. And all such persons, under a concurrence of temptations and outward occasions, will either reject it, or prefer other guides before it.

2. The *power of lust* rising up unto a resolution of living in those sins, whereunto the Scripture doth unavoidably annex eternal ruin, hath prevailed with many to cast off its authority. For whilst they are resolved to live in an outrage of sin, to allow a divine truth and power in the Scripture, is to cast themselves under a present torment, as well as to

ascertain their future misery: for no other can be his condition who is perpetually sensible that God always condemns him in all that he doth, and will assuredly take vengeance of him, which is the constant language of the Scripture concerning such persons. Wherefore, although they will not immediately fall into an open atheistical opposition unto it, as that which, it may be, is not consistent with their interest and reputation in the world, yet looking upon it as the devils did on Jesus Christ, as that which 'comes to torment them before their time,' they keep it at the greatest distance from their thoughts and minds, until they have habituated themselves unto a contempt of it. There being, therefore, an utter impossibility of giving any pretence of reconciliation between the owning of the Scriptures to be the word of God, and a resolution to live in an excess of known sin; multitudes suffer their minds to be bribed by their corrupt affections to a relinquishment of any regard unto it.

3. The *scandalous quarrels,* and disputations of those of the *church of Rome* against the Scripture and its authority, have contributed much unto the ruin of the faith of many. Their great design is by all means to secure the power, authority, and infallibility of their church. Of these they say continually, as the apostle in another case of the mariners, 'unless these stay in the ship we cannot be saved;' without an acknowledgment of these things they would have it, that men can neither at present believe, nor be saved hereafter. To secure this interest, the authority of the Scripture must be by all means questioned and impaired. A divine authority in itself they will allow it, but with respect unto us it hath none but what it obtains by the suffrage and testimony of their church. But whereas *authority* is ἐκ τῶν προς τι, and consists essentially in the relation and respect which it hath unto others, or those that are to be subject unto it; to say that it hath an *authority in itself,* but *none towards us,* is not only to deny that it hath any authority at all, but also to reproach it with an empty name. They deal with it as the soldiers did with Christ, 'they put a crown on his head, and clothed him with a purple robe; and bowing the knee before him, mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews.' They ascribe unto it the crown and robe of divine authority in itself, but not towards any one person in the world. So, *if they*

please, God shall be God, and his word be of some credit among men. Herein they seek continually to entangle those of the weaker sort, by urging them vehemently with this question, *How do you know the Scripture to be the word of God?* and have in continual readiness a number of *sophistical artifices* to weaken all evidences that shall be pleaded in its behalf. Nor is that all; but on all occasions they insinuate such *objections against it* from its *obscurity, imperfections, want of order, difficulties, seeming contradictions* in it, as are suited to take off the minds of men from a firm assent unto it, or reliance on it. As if a company of men should conspire by crafty multiplied insinuations, divulged on all advantages, to weaken the reputation of a chaste and sober matron; although they cannot deprive her of her virtue; yet unless the world were wiser than, for the most part, it appears to be, they will insensibly take off from her due esteem. And this is as bold an attempt as can well be made in any case. For the first tendency of these courses is to make men atheists, after which success it is left at uncertain hazard whether they will be Papists or no. Wherefore, as there can be no greater nor more dishonourable reflection made on Christian religion, than that it hath no other evidence or testimony of its truth, but the authority and witness of those by whom it is at present professed, and who have notable worldly advantages thereby; so the minds of multitudes are secretly influenced by the poison of these disputes, to think it no way necessary to believe the Scripture to be the word of God; or at least are shaken off from the grounds whereon they have professed it so to be. And the like disservice is done unto faith and the souls of men, by such as advance a light within, or immediate inspiration into competition with it, or the room of it. For as such imaginations take place, and prevail in the minds of men, so their respect unto the Scripture, and all sense of its divine authority doth decay, as experience doth openly manifest.

It is, I say, from an unusual concurrence of these and the like causes and occasions, that there is at present among us such a decay in, relinquishment of, and opposition unto, the belief of the Scripture, as, it may be, former ages could not parallel.

But against all these objections and temptations, the

minds of true believers are secured by supplies of spiritual light, wisdom, and grace from the Holy Ghost.

3. There are several other especial gracious actings of the Holy Spirit on the minds of believers, which belong also unto this *internal real testimony*, whereby their faith is established. Such are his *anointing* and *sealing* of them, his *witnessing* with them, and his being an *earnest* in them, all which must be elsewhere spoken unto. Hereby is our faith every day more and more increased and established. Wherefore, although no *internal work* of the Spirit can be the *formal reason* of our faith, or that which it is resolved into; yet is it such, as without it we can never sincerely believe as we ought, nor be established in believing against temptations and objections.

And with respect unto this work of the Holy Ghost it is, that divines at the first *reformation* did generally resolve our faith of the divine authority of the Scripture into the testimony of the Holy Spirit. But this they did not do exclusively unto the proper use of external arguments and motives of credibility, whose store indeed is great, and whose fountain is inexhaustible. For they arise from all the indubitable notions that we have of God or ourselves, in reference unto our present duty or future happiness. Much less did they exclude that evidence thereof which the Holy Ghost gives unto it in and by itself. Their judgment is well expressed in the excellent words of one of them. 'Maneat ergo,' saith he, 'hoc fixum, quos Spiritus intus docuit solide acquiescere in Scripturâ, et hanc quidem esse *αὐτοπιστόν* neque demonstrationi et rationibus subjici eam fas esse; quam tamen meretur apud nos certitudinem Spiritus testimonio consequi; etsi enim reverentiam sua sibi ultro majestate conciliat, tunc tamen demum serio nos afficit, quum per Spiritum obsignata est cordibus nostris. Istius ergo veritate illuminati, jam non aut nostro, aut aliorum judicio credimus a Deo esse Scripturam; sed supra humanum judicium certo certius constituimus, non secus ac si ipsius Dei numen illic intueremur hominum ministerio, ab ipsissimo Dei ore ad nos fluxisse. Non argumenta, non veri similitudines quærimus, quibus judicium nostrum incumbat; sed ut rei extra estimandi aleam positæ judicium ingeniumque nostrum subjicimus. Non qualiter superstitionibus solent miseri homines captivam

mentem addicere; sed quia non dubiam vim Numinis illic sentimus vigere et spirare, quam ad parendum scientes ac volentes, vividius tamen et efficacius quam pro humana aut voluntate aut scientia trahimur et accendimur. Talis ergo est persuasio quæ rationes non requirat, talis notitia cui optima ratio constet, nempe, in qua securius constantiusque mens quiescat, quam in ullis rationibus; talis denique sensus, qui nisi ex cælesti revelatione nequeat. Non aliud loquor quam quod apud se experitur fidelium unusquisque nisi quod longe infra justam rei explicationem verba subsidunt.' Calv. Instit. lib. 2. cap. 7—9.

And we may here briefly call over what we have attained or passed through. For, (1.) we have shewed, in general, both what is the nature of *divine revelation,* and *divine illumination,* with their mutual respect unto one another. (2.) What are the principal external arguments or motives of *credibility,* whereby the Scripture may be proved to be of a divine original. (3.) What kind of persuasion is the effect of them, or what is the assent which we give unto the truth of the Scriptures on their account. (4.) What *objective evidence* there is unto reason in the doctrine of the Scriptures to induce the mind to assent unto them. (5.) What is the *nature of that faith* whereby we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, and how it is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. (6.) What is that *internal testimony* which is given unto the divine authority of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit, what is the force and use thereof. The principal part of our work doth yet remain.

That which we have thus far made way for, and which is now our only remaining inquiry, is, *What is the work of the Holy Ghost with respect unto the objective evidence which we have concerning the Scripture, that it is the word of God,* which is the formal reason of our faith, and whereinto it is resolved; that is, we come to inquire and to give a direct answer unto that question, *Why we believe the Scripture to be the word of God?* what it is that our faith rests upon herein? and what it is that makes it the duty of every man to believe it so to be, unto whom it is proposed? And the reason why I shall be the briefer herein is, because I have long since in another discourse cleared this argument, and I shall not here again call over any thing that was delivered therein, because what

hath been unto this day gainsaid unto it, or excepted against it, hath been of little weight or consideration. Unto this great inquiry, therefore, I say,

We believe the Scripture to be the word of God with divine faith for its own sake only; or our faith is resolved into the authority and truth of God only, as revealing himself unto us therein and thereby. And this authority and veracity of God do infallibly manifest or evince themselves unto our faith, or our minds in the exercise of it, by the revelation itself in the Scripture, and no otherwise. Or, *Thus saith the Lord,* is the reason *why we ought to believe,* and why we do so; why we believe at all in general, and why we believe any thing in particular. And this we call the *formal object* or *reason* of our faith.

And it is evident that this is not God himself absolutely considered; for so he is only the *material object* of our faith; 'He that cometh unto God must believe that he is;' Heb. xi. 6. Nor is it the truth of God absolutely, for that we believe as we do other *essential properties* of his nature: but it is the truth of God *revealing himself, his mind and will, unto us in the Scripture.* This is the sole reason why we believe any thing with divine faith.

It is, or may be, inquired, wherefore we do believe *Jesus Christ to be the Son of God,* or that God is one in nature, subsisting in three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? I answer, it is, because God himself, the first truth, who *cannot lie,* hath revealed and declared these things so to be, and he who is *our all,* requireth us so to believe. If it be asked how, wherein, or whereby, God hath revealed and declared these things so to be, or what is that revelation which God hath made hereof? I answer, *It is the Scripture, and that only.* And if it be asked, how I know this Scripture to be a divine revelation, to be the word of God? I answer, 1. I do not know it *demonstratively,* upon rational scientifical principles, because such a divine revelation is not capable of such a demonstration; 1 Cor. ii. 9. 2. I do not assent unto it, or think it to be so, upon arguments and *motives highly probable,* or morally uncontrollable only, as I am assuredly persuaded of many other things whereof I can have no certain demonstration; 1 Thess. ii. 15. But I believe it so to be *with faith divine and supernatural,* resting on, and resolved

into, the authority and veracity of God himself, evidencing themselves unto my mind, my soul, and my conscience, by this *revelation itself*, and not otherwise.

Here we rest, and deny that we believe the Scripture to be the word of God *formally* for any other reason but itself, which assureth us of its divine authority. And if we rest not here, we must run on the rock of a *moral certainty* only, which shakes the foundation of all divine faith; or fall into the gulf and labyrinth of an *endless circle*, in proving two things *mutually* by one another, as the church by the Scripture, and the Scripture by the church, in an everlasting rotation. Unless we intend so to wander, we must come to something wherein we may rest for its own sake, and that not with a strong and firm opinion, but with divine faith. And nothing can rationally pretend unto this privilege, but the truth of God manifesting itself in the Scripture. And therefore, those, who will not allow it hereunto, do, some of them, wisely deny that the Scriptures being the word of God, is the object of divine faith directly, but only of a moral persuasion from external arguments and considerations. And I do believe that they will grant, that if the Scripture be so to be believed, it must be for its own sake. For those who would have us to believe the Scripture to be the word of God upon the authority of the church, proposing it unto us, and witnessing so to be, though they make a fair appearance of a ready and easy way for the exercise of faith, yet, when things come to be sifted and tried, they do so confound all sorts of things, that they know not where to stand or abide. But it is not now my business to examine their pretences, I have done it elsewhere. I shall, therefore, prove and establish the assertion laid down, after I have made way to it by one or two previous observations.

1. We suppose herein all the *motives of credibility* before mentioned, that is, all the arguments *ab extra*, which vehemently persuade the Scripture to be the word of God, and wherewith it may be protected against objections and temptations to the contrary. They have all of them their use, and may in their proper place be insisted on. Especially ought they to be pleaded when the Scripture is attacked by an atheism, arising from the love and practice of those lusts and sins which are severely condemned therein, and threatened

with the utmost vengeance. With others, they may be considered as previous inducements unto believing, or concomitant means of strengthening faith in them that do believe. In the first way, I confess, to the best of my observation of things past and present, their use is not great, nor ever hath been in the church of God. For assuredly, the most that do sincerely believe the divine original, and the authority of the Scripture, do it without any great consideration of them, or being much influenced by them. And there are many who, as Austin speaks, are saved *simplicitate credendi,* and not *subtilitate disputandi,* that are not able to inquire much into them, nor yet to apprehend much of their force and efficacy, when they are proposed unto them. Most persons, therefore, are effectually converted to God, and have saving faith whereby they believe the Scripture, and virtually all that is contained in it, before they have ever once considered them. And God forbid we should think that none believe the Scripture aright, but those who are able to apprehend and manage the subtile arguments of learned men produced in their confirmation. Yea, we affirm, on the contrary, that those who believe them on no other grounds have indeed no true divine faith at all. Hence they were not of old insisted on for the ingenerating of faith in them to whom the word was preached, nor ordinarily are so to this day by any who understand what is their work and duty. But in the second way, wherever there is occasion from objections, oppositions, or temptations, they may be pleaded to good use and purpose. And they may do well to be furnished with them, who are unavoidably exposed unto trials of that nature. For, as for that course which some take in all places and at all times, to be disputing about the Scriptures, and their authority; it is a practice giving countenance unto atheism, and is to be abhorred of all that fear God, and the consequents of it are sufficiently manifest.

2. The *ministry of the church,* as it is the *ground and pillar of truth,* holding it up and declaring it, is in an ordinary way previously necessary unto believing. For 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' We believe the Scripture to be the word of God for itself alone, but not by itself alone. The ministry of the word is the means which God hath appointed for the declaration and making known

the testimony which the Holy Spirit gives in the Scripture unto its divine original. And this is the ordinary way whereby men are brought to believe the Scripture to be the word of God. The church in its ministry, owning, witnessing, and avowing it so to be, instructing all sorts of persons out of it, there is, together with a sense and apprehension of the truth and power of the things taught and revealed in it, faith in itself as the word of God ingenerated in them.

3. We do also here suppose the *internal effectual work of the Spirit* begetting faith in us as was before declared; without which, we can believe neither the Scripture nor any thing else with faith divine, not for want of evidence in them, but of faith in ourselves.

These things being supposed, we do affirm, that *it is the authority and truth of God, as manifesting themselves in the supernatural revelation made in the Scripture, that our faith ariseth from and is resolved into.* And herein consists that testimony which the Spirit gives unto the word of God that it is so; 'for it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.' The Holy Ghost being the immediate author of the whole Scripture, doth therein and thereby give testimony unto the divine truth and original of it, by the characters of divine authority and veracity impressed on it, and evidencing themselves in its power and efficacy, And let it be observed, that what we assert, respects the revelation itself, the Scripture, the writing, *τὴν γραφὴν*, and not merely the things written or contained in it. The arguments produced by some to prove the truth of the doctrines of the Scripture, reach not the cause in hand. For our inquiry is not about believing the truths revealed, but about believing the revelation itself, the Scripture itself, to be divine. And this we do only because of the authority and veracity of the revealer, that is, of God himself, manifesting themselves therein.

To manifest this fully, I shall do these things.

1. Prove that our *faith is so resolved into the Scripture* as a divine revelation, and not into any thing else, that is, we believe the Scripture to be the word of God for its own sake, and not for the sake of any thing else, either external arguments, or authoritative testimony of men whatever.

2. Shew how, or by what means, the Scripture doth *evi-*

dence its own divine original, or the authority of God is so evidenced in it and by it, as that we need no other *formal cause* or *reason of our faith,* whatever motives or means of believing we may make use of. And as to the first of these.

1. That is the *formal reason* whereon we do believe, which the Scripture proposeth as the only *reason why we should so do,* why it is our duty to do so, and whereunto it requireth our *assent.* Now this is to itself as it is the word of God, and because it is so. Or it proposeth the authority of God in itself, and that alone, which we are to acquiesce in, and the truth of God, and that alone, which our faith is to rest on, and is resolved into. It doth not require us to believe it upon the testimony of any church, or on any other arguments that it gives us to prove that it is from God; but speaks unto us immediately in his name, and thereon requires faith and obedience.

Some, it may be, will ask, *Whether this prove the Scripture to be the word of God, because it says so of itself, when any other writing may say the same?* But we are not now giving arguments to prove unto others the Scripture to be the word of God, but only proving and shewing what our own faith resteth on, and is resolved into, or at least ought so to be. How it evidenceth itself unto our faith to be the word of God we shall afterward declare. It is sufficient unto our present purpose, that God requires us to believe the Scripture for no other reason but because it is his word, or a divine revelation from him; and if so, his authority and truth are the formal reason why we believe the Scripture or any thing contained in it. To this purpose do testimonies abound in particular, besides that general attestation which is given unto it in that sole preface of divine revelations, 'Thus saith the Lord;' and therefore, they are to be believed. Some of them we must mention.

Deut. xxxi. 11—13. 'When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, women, and children, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children which have not known any thing, may hear and learn to fear

the Lord your God.' It is plain that God here requireth faith and obedience of the whole people, men, women, and children. The inquiry is, what he requireth it unto? It is to this law, to this law written in the books of Moses, which was to be read unto them out of the book, at the hearing of which they were obliged to believe and obey. To evidence that law to be his, he proposeth nothing but itself. But it will be said, that generation was sufficiently convinced that the law was from God, by the miracles which they beheld in the giving of it. But moreover it is ordered to be proposed unto children of future generations, who knew nothing, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord.

That which by the appointment of God is to be *proposed unto them that know nothing* that they may believe, that is unto them the *formal reason* of their believing. But this is the written word, 'Thou shalt read this law unto them who have known nothing, that they may hear and learn,' &c. Whatever use, therefore, there may be of other motives or testimonies to commend the law unto us, of the ministry of the church especially, which is here required unto the proposal of the word unto men, it is the law itself, or the written word, which is the object of our faith, and which we believe for its own sake; see also chap. xxix. 29. where revealed things are said to belong unto us and our children that we might do them, that is, receive them on the account of their divine revelation.

Isa. viii. 19, 20. 'And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards, that peep and mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' The inquiry is, by what means men may come to satisfaction in their minds and consciences, or what their faith and trust is in. Two things are proposed unto this end. (1.) Immediate *diabolical revelations*, real or pretended. (2.) The *written word of God*, the law and the testimony. Hereunto are we sent, and that upon the account of its own authority alone, in opposition unto all other pretences of assurance or security. And the sole reason why any one doth not acquiesce by faith in the written word, is, because he hath no *mornings or light of truth* shining on him.

But how shall we know the law and testimony, this written word, to be the word of God, and believe it so to be, and distinguish it from every other pretended divine revelation, that is not so? This is declared,

Jer. xxiii. 28, 29. 'The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my word like as fire, saith the Lord? and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?' It is supposed, that there are two persons in reputation for divine revelations esteemed prophets; one of them only pretends so to be, and declares the dreams of his own fancy, or the divinations of his own mind, as the word of God. The other hath the word of God and declares it faithfully from him. Yea, but how shall we know the one from the other? Even as men know wheat from chaff, by their different natures and effects. For as false pretended revelations are but as chaff which every wind will scatter; so the true word of God is like a fire, and like a hammer, is accompanied with that light, efficacy, and power, that it manifests itself unto the consciences of men so to be. Hereon doth God call us to rest our faith on it in opposition unto all other pretences whatever.

But is it of this authority and efficacy in itself? See Luke xvi. 27—31. 'Then said he (the rich man in hell), I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him (Lazarus who was dead), unto my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead they would repent; and he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' The question here between Abraham and the rich man in this parable, indeed between the wisdom of God and the superstitious contrivances of men, is about the way and means of bringing those who are unbelievers and impenitent unto faith and repentance. He who was in hell apprehended that nothing would make them believe but a miracle, one rising from the dead and speaking unto them; which, or the like marvellous ope-

rations, many at this day think would have mighty power and influence upon them to settle their minds and change their lives; should they see one rise from the dead, and come and converse with them, this would convince them of the immortality of the soul, of future rewards and punishments, as giving them sufficient evidence thereof, so that they would assuredly repent and change their lives; but as things are stated they have no sufficient evidence of these things, so that they doubt so far about them as that they are not really influenced by them; give them but one real miracle and you shall have them for ever. This, I say, was the opinion and judgment of him who was represented in hell, as it is of many who are posting thither apace. He who was in heaven thought otherwise, wherein we have the immediate judgment of Jesus Christ given in this matter, determining this controversy. The question is about sufficient evidence and efficacy to cause us to believe things divine and supernatural; and this he determines to be in the written word, 'Moses and the prophets.' If he that will not believe on the single evidence of the written word to be from God, or a divine revelation of his will, will never believe upon the evidence of miracles, nor any other motives, then that written word contains in itself the entire formal reason of faith, or all that evidence of the authority and truth of God in it, which faith divine and supernatural rests upon; that is, it is to be believed for its own sake. But, saith our Lord Jesus Christ himself, if men will not hear, that is, believe Moses and the prophets, 'neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead,' and come and preach unto them, a greater miracle than which they could not desire. Now this could not be spoken, if the Scripture did not contain in itself the whole entire formal reason of believing; for if it have not this, something necessary unto believing would be wanting, though that were enjoyed. And this is directly affirmed,

John xx. 30, 31. 'And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name.' The signs which Christ wrought did evidence him to be the Son of God. But how come we to know and believe these signs? what is the way

and means thereof? Saith the blessed apostle, 'these things are written that you may believe;' this writing of them by divine inspiration is so far sufficient to beget and assure faith in you, as that thereby you may have eternal life through Jesus Christ. For if the writing of divine things and revelations be the means appointed of God to cause men to believe unto eternal life, then it must as such carry along with it sufficient reason why we should believe, and grounds whereon we should do so. And in like manner is this matter determined by the apostle Peter,

2 Pet. i. 16—21. 'For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory; This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' The question is about the gospel, or the declaration of the powerful coming of Jesus Christ, whether it were to be believed or no, and, if it were, upon what grounds? Some said it was a 'cunningly devised fable;' others, that it was a fanatical story of madmen, as Festus thought of it, when preached by Paul; Acts xxvi. 24. and very many are of the same mind still. The apostles, on the contrary, averred that what was spoken concerning him, were 'words of truth and soberness,' yea, 'faithful sayings, and worthy of all acceptation;' 1 Tim. i. 15. that is, to be believed for its worth and truth. The grounds and reasons hereof, are two. (1.) The testimony of the apostles, who not only conversed with Jesus Christ, and were eye-witnesses of his majesty, beholding his glory, 'the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,' John i. 14. which they gave in evidence of the truth of the gospel; 1 John i. 1. But also heard a miraculous testi-

mony given unto him immediately from God in heaven; ver. 17, 18. This gave them indeed sufficient assurance; but whereinto shall they resolve their faith who heard not this testimony? Why, they have a 'more sure,' that is, a most sure 'word of prophecy,' that is, the written word of God, that is sufficient of itself to secure their faith in this matter, especially as confirmed by the testimony of the apostles, whereby the church comes to be built in its faith on the 'foundation of the prophets and apostles;' Eph. ii. 20. But why should we believe this word of prophecy? may not that also be a 'cunningly devised fable,' and the whole Scripture be but the suggestions of men's private spirits, as is objected? Ver. 20. All is finally resolved into this, that the writers of it were immediately moved and acted by the Holy Ghost, from which divine original it carrieth along its own evidence with it. Plainly, that which the apostle teacheth us is, that we believe all other divine truths for the Scripture's sake, or because they are declared therein; but the Scripture we believe for its own sake, or because 'holy men of God wrote it as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'

So is the whole object of faith proposed by the same apostle, 2 Pet. iii. 2. 'The words that were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandments of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.' And because our faith is resolved into them, we are said to be 'built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles,' as was said, Eph. ii. 20. that is, our faith rests solely, as on its proper foundation which bears the weight of it, on the authority and truth of God in their writings. Hereunto we may add that of Paul,

Rom. xvi. 25, 26. 'According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known unto all nations for the obedience of faith.' The matter to be believed is the mystery of the gospel, which was kept secret since the world began, or from the giving of the first promise, not absolutely, but with respect unto that full manifestation which it hath now received. This God commands to be believed, the everlasting God, he who hath sovereign authority over all, requires faith in a way of obedi-

ence hereunto. But what ground or reason have we to believe it? This alone is proposed, namely, the divine revelation made in the preaching of the apostles, and writings of the prophets; for 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;' Rom. x. 17. This course and no other did our Saviour, even after his resurrection, take to beget and confirm faith in the disciples; Luke xxiv. 25—27. That great testimony to this purpose, 2 Tim. iii. 14—17. I do not plead in particular, because I have so fully insisted on it in another discourse.

From these and many other testimonies to the same purpose, which might be produced, it is evident,

1. That it is the Scripture itself, the *word* or will of God as *revealed* or *written*, which is proposed unto us as the object of our faith and obedience, which we are to receive and believe with faith divine and supernatural.

2. That *no other reason* is proposed unto us, either as a *motive* to encourage us, or as an *argument to* assure us, that we shall not be mistaken, but only its own *divine original and authority*, making our duty necessary, and securing our faith infallibly. And those testimonies are with me of more weight a thousand times, than the plausible reasonings of any to the contrary. With some indeed it is grown a matter of contempt to quote or cite the Scripture in our writings, such reverence have they for the ancient fathers, some of whose writings are nothing else but a perpetual contexture of Scripture. But for such who pretend to despise those testimonies in this case, it is because either they do not understand what they are produced to confirm, or cannot answer the proof that is in them. For it is not unlikely but that some persons well conceited of their own understanding in things wherein they are most ignorant, will pride and please themselves in the ridiculousness of proving the Scripture to be the word of God by testimonies taken out of it. But, as was said, we must not forego the truth because either they will not or cannot understand what we discourse about.

2. Our assertion is confirmed by the *uniform practice* of the *prophets* and *apostles*, and all the penmen of the Scripture, in proposing these divine revelations which they received by immediate inspiration from God. For that which was the reason of their faith unto whom they first declared those

divine revelations, is the reason of our faith now they are recorded in the Scripture. For the writing of it being by God's appointment, it comes into the room, and supplies the place, of their oral ministry. On what ground soever men were obliged to receive and believe divine revelations, when made unto them by the prophets and apostles, on the same are we obliged to receive and believe them now they are made unto us in the Scripture, the writing being by divine inspiration, and appointed as the means and cause of our faith. It is true, God was pleased sometimes to bear witness unto their personal ministry by miracles, or signs and wonders, as Heb. ii. 4. 'God bearing them witness.' But this was only at some seasons, and with some of them. That which they universally insisted on, whether they wrought any miracles or no, was, that the word which they preached, declared, wrote, was not the word of man, came not by any private suggestion, or from any invention of their own, but was indeed the word of God; 1 Thess. ii. 13. and declared by them as they were acted by the Holy Ghost; 2 Pet. i. 21.

Under the Old Testament, although the prophets sometimes referred persons unto the word already written, as that which their faith was to acquiesce in, Isa. viii. 20. Mal. iv. 4. setting out its power and excellency for all the ends of faith and obedience; Psal. xix. 7—9. cxix. and not to any thing else, nor to any other motives or arguments to beget and require faith, but its own authority only; yet, as to their own especial messages and revelations, they laid the foundation of all the faith and obedience which they required, in this alone, 'Thus saith the Lord, the God of truth.' And under the New Testament, the infallible preachers and writers thereof do, in the first place, propose the writings of the Old Testament to be received for their own sake, or on the account of their divine original; see John v. 45—47. Luke xvi. 29. 31. Matt. xxi. 42. Acts xviii. 24, 25. 28. xxiv. 14. xxvi. 22. 2 Pet. i. 21. Hence are they called, 'the oracles of God;' Rom. iii. 2. And oracles always required an assent for their own sakes, and other evidence they pleaded none. And for the revelations which they superadded, they pleaded that they had them 'immediately from God, by Jesus Christ;' Gal. i. 1. And this was accompanied with uch an infallible assurance in them that

received it, as to be preferred above a supposition of the highest miracle to confirm any thing to the contrary; Gal. i. 8. For if an angel from heaven should have preached any other doctrine than what they revealed and proposed in the name and authority of God, they were to esteem him accursed. For this cause they still insisted on their apostolical authority and mission, which included infallible inspiration and directions, as the reason of the faith of them unto whom they preached and wrote. And as for those who were not themselves divinely inspired, or wherein those that were so did not act by immediate inspiration, they proved the truth of what they delivered by its consonancy unto the Scriptures already written, referring the minds and consciences of men unto them for their ultimate satisfaction; Acts xviii. 28. xxviii. 33.

3. It was before granted, that there is required as subservient unto believing, as a *means* of it, or the resolution of our faith into the authority of God in the Scriptures, the *ministerial proposal* of the Scriptures, and the truths contained in them, with the command of God for obedience unto them; Rom. xvi. 25, 26. This ministry of the church, either extraordinary or ordinary, God hath appointed unto this end, and ordinarily it is indispensable thereunto; Rom. x. 14, 15. 'How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach unless they are sent?' Without this ordinarily we cannot believe the Scripture to be the word of God, nor the things contained in it to be from him, though we do not believe either the one or the other for it. I do grant that in extraordinary cases outward providences may supply the room of this ministerial proposal; for it is all one, as unto our duty, by what means the Scripture is brought unto us. But upon a supposition of this ministerial proposal of the word, which ordinarily includes the whole duty of the church in its testimony and declaration of the truth, I desire to know whether those unto whom it is proposed are obliged, without farther external evidence, to receive it as the word of God, to rest their faith in it, and submit their consciences unto it? The rule seems plain, that they are obliged so to do; Mark xvi. 16. We may

consider this under the distinct ways of its proposal, extraordinary and ordinary.

Upon the preaching of any of the prophets by immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, or on their declaration of any *new revelation* they had from God, by preaching or writing, suppose Isaiah or Jeremiah, I desire to know whether or no all persons were bound to receive their doctrine as from God, to *believe* and submit unto the *authority* of God in the revelation made by him, without any *external* motives or arguments, or the testimony or authority of the church witnessing thereunto? If they were not, then were they all excused as guiltless, who refused to believe the message they declared in the name of God, and in despising the *warnings* and *instructions* which they gave them. For external motives they used not, and the *present church* mostly condemned them and their *ministry;* as is plain in the case of Jeremiah. Now it is impious to imagine that those to whom they spake in the name of God, were not obliged to believe them, and it tends to the overthrow of all religion. If we shall say that they were obliged to believe them, and that under the penalty of divine displeasure, and so to receive the revelation made by them, or their declaration of it, as the *word of God;* then it must contain in it the formal *reason* of believing, or the full and entire cause, reason, and ground, why they ought to believe with faith divine and supernatural. Or let another ground of faith in this case be assigned.

Suppose the proposal be made in the *ordinary* ministry of the church. Hereby the Scripture is declared unto men to be the *word of God;* they are acquainted with it, and what God requires of them therein, and they are charged in the name of God to receive and believe it. Doth any obligation unto believing hence arise? It may be some will say that immediately there is not; only they will grant that men are bound hereon to *inquire* into such *reasons* and *motives*, as are proposed unto them for its reception and admission. I say, there is no doubt but that men are obliged to consider all things of that nature which are proposed unto them, and not to receive it with *brutish implicit belief*. For the receiving of it is to be an act of men's own minds or understandings, on the best grounds and evidences which the

nature of the thing proposed is capable of. But supposing men to do their duty in their diligent inquiries into the whole matter, I desire to know, whether by the proposal mentioned, there come upon men an obligation to believe? If there do not, then are all men perfectly innocent, who refuse to receive the gospel, in the preaching of it, as to any respect unto *that preaching;* which to say, is to overthrow the whole dispensation of the ministry. If they are obliged to *believe* upon the preaching of it, then hath the word in itself those *evidences* of its divine original and authority, which are a sufficient ground of faith, or reason of believing; for what God requires us to believe upon, hath so always.

As the issue of this whole discourse, it is affirmed, that our faith is built on, and resolved into, the *Scripture itself,* which carries with it its own evidence of being a divine revelation. And, therefore, doth that faith ultimately rest in the *truth and authority of God alone,* and not in any human testimony, such as is that of the church, nor in any rational arguments or motives that are absolutely fallible.

It may be said, that if the Scripture thus *evidence* itself to be the word of God, as the sun manifesteth itself by light, and fire by heat, or as the first principles of reason are evident in themselves without farther proof or testimony; then every one, and all men, upon the proposal of the Scripture unto them, and its own bare assertion, that it is the word of God, would, necessarily, on that evidence alone, assent thereunto, and believe it so to be. But this is not so, all experience lieth against it; nor is there any pleadable ground of reason that so it is, or that so it ought to be.

In answer unto this objection, I shall do these two things.

1. I shall shew what it is, what power, what faculty in the minds of men, whereunto this revelation is proposed, and whereby we assent unto the truth of it, wherein the mistakes whereon this objection proceedeth will be discovered.

2. I shall mention some of those things, whereby the Holy Ghost testifieth and giveth evidence unto the Scripture in and by itself, so as that our faith may be immediately resolved into the veracity of God alone.

1. And, in the first place, we may consider, that there are *three ways* whereby we *assent* unto any thing that is proposed unto us as true, and receive it as such.

(1.) By inbred principles of *natural light*, and the first rational actings of our minds. This in *reason* answers *instinct* in irrational creatures. Hence God complains that his people did neglect and sin against their own natural light, and first dictates of reason, whereas brute creatures would not forsake the conduct of the instinct of their natures; Isa. i. 3. In general, the mind is necessarily determined to an assent unto the proper objects of these principles; it cannot do otherwise. It cannot but assent unto the prime dictates of the light of nature, yea, those dictates are nothing but its assent. Its first *apprehension* of the things which the light of nature embraceth, without either express reasonings or farther consideration, are this assent. Thus doth the mind embrace in itself the general notions of moral good and evil, with the difference between them, however it practically complies not with what they guide unto; Jude 10. And so doth it assent unto many principles of reason, as that the whole is greater than the part, without admitting any debate about them.

(2.) By *rational considerations* of things externally proposed unto us. Herein the mind exerciseth its discursive faculty, gathering one thing out of another, and concluding one thing from another. And hereon is it able to assent unto what is proposed unto it in *various degrees of certainty*, according unto the nature and degree of the evidence it proceeds upon. Hence it hath a *certain knowledge* of some things; of others an *opinion* or persuasion prevalent against the objections to the contrary, which it knows, and whose force it understands, which may be true or false.

(3.) By *faith*. This respects that power of our minds, whereby we are able to assent unto any thing as true, which we have no first principles concerning, no inbred notions of, nor can from more known principles make unto ourselves any certain rational conclusions concerning them. This is our assent *upon testimony*, whereon we believe many things, which no sense, inbred principles, nor reasonings of our own, could either give us an acquaintance with, or an assurance of. And this *assent* also hath not only *various degrees*, but is also of *divers kinds*, according as the *testimony* is which it ariseth from, and resteth on; as being *human*, if that be *human*, and *divine*, if that be so also.

According to these distinct faculties and powers of our souls, God is pleased to reveal or make known himself, his mind or will, *three ways* unto us. For he hath implanted no power on our minds, but the principal use and exercise of it are to be with respect unto himself, and our living unto him, which is the end of them all. And a neglect of the improvement of them unto this end, is the highest aggravation of sin. It is an aggravation of sin, when men abuse the creatures of God otherwise than he hath appointed, or in not using them to his glory; when they take his corn, and wine, and oil, and spend them on their lusts; Hos. ii. 8. It is a higher aggravation when men in sinning abuse and dishonour their own bodies; for these are the principal external workmanship of God, being made for eternity, and whose preservation unto his glory is committed unto us in an especial manner. This the apostle declareth to be the peculiar aggravation of the sin of fornication and uncleanness in any kind; 1 Cor. vi. 18, 19. But the height of impiety consists in the abuse of the faculties and powers of the soul, wherewith we are endowed purposely and immediately for the glorifying of God. Hence proceed unbelief, profaneness, blasphemy, atheism, and the like pollutions of the spirit or mind. And these are sins of the highest provocation. For the powers and faculties of our minds being given us only to enable us to live unto God, the diverting of their principal exercise unto other ends, is an act of enmity against him, and affront unto him.

(1.) He makes himself known unto us by the *innate principles of our nature,* unto which he hath communicated as a power of apprehending, so an indelible sense of his being, his authority, and his will, so far as our natural dependance on him, and moral subjection unto him, do require. For whereas there are two things in this natural light and first dictates of reason; first, a *power of conceiving,* discerning, and assenting; and, secondly, a *power of judging* and determining upon the things so discerned and assented unto: by the one God makes known his being, and essential properties; by the other his sovereign authority over all.

As to the first, the apostle affirms, that τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς; Rom. i. 19. 'That which may be known of God (his essence, being, subsistence, his natu-

ral, necessary, essential properties) is manifest in them;' that is, it hath a self-evidencing power, acting itself in the minds of all men endued with natural light and reason.

And as unto his *sovereign authority*, he doth evidence it in and by the *consciences of men*, which are the judgment that they make, and cannot but make, of themselves and their actions, with respect unto the authority and judgment of God; Rom. ii. 14, 15. And thus the mind doth assent unto the principles of God's being and authority, antecedently unto any actual exercise of the discursive faculty of reason, or other testimony whatever.

(2.) He doth it unto our *reason in its exercise*, by proposing such things unto its consideration, as from whence it may, and cannot but conclude, in an assent unto the truth of what God intends to reveal unto us that way. This he doth by the works of creation and providence, which present themselves unavoidably unto reason in its exercise, to instruct us in the nature, being, and properties of God.

Thus the 'heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard;' Psal. xix. 1—3. But yet they do not thus declare, evidence, and reveal the glory of God unto the first principles and notions of natural light, without the actual exercise of reason. Only they do so 'when we consider his heavens the work of his fingers, the moon and the stars which he hath ordained,' as the same psalmist speaks, Psal. viii. 3. A rational consideration of them, their greatness, order, beauty, and use, is required unto that testimony and evidence which God gives in them and by them unto himself, his glorious being and power. To this purpose the apostle discourseth at large concerning the works of creation; Rom. i. 20—22. as also, of those of providence; Acts xiv. 15—17. xvii. 24—28. and the rational use we are to make of them; ver. 29. So God calls unto men for the exercise of their reason about these things; reproaching them with stupidity and brutishness where they are wanting therein; Isa. xlvi. 7—9. xliv. 18—20.

(3.) God reveals himself unto *our faith*, or that power of our souls whereby we are able to assent unto the truth of what is proposed unto us upon testimony. And this he doth by

his word, or the Scriptures, proposed unto us in the manner and way before expressed.

He doth not reveal himself by his word unto the principles of natural light, nor unto reason in its exercise. But yet these principles, and reason itself, with all the faculties of our minds, are consequentially affected with that revelation, and are drawn forth into their proper exercise by it. But in the gospel the righteousness of God 'is revealed from faith to faith;' Rom. i. 17. not to natural light, sense, or reason, in the first place. And it is faith that is the evidence of things not seen, as revealed in the word; Heb. xi. 1. Unto this kind of revelation, *Thus saith the Lord*, is the only ground and reason of our assent; and that assent is the assent of faith, because it is resolved into testimony alone.

And concerning these several ways of the communication or revelation of the knowledge of God, it must be always observed, that there is a *perfect consonancy in the things revealed by them all.* If any thing pretends from the one, what is absolutely contradictory unto the other, or our senses as the means of them, it is not to be received.

The foundation of the whole, as of all the actings of our souls, is in the inbred principles of natural light, or first necessary dictates of our intellectual rational nature. This, so far as it extends, is a *rule unto our apprehension* in all that follows. Wherefore, if any pretend in the exercise of reason, to conclude unto any thing concerning the nature, being, or will of God, that is directly *contradictory* unto those principles and dictates, it is no divine revelation unto our reason, but a *paralogism* from the defect of reason in its exercise. This is that which the apostle chargeth on, and vehemently urgeth against, the *Heathen philosophers.* Inbred notions they had in themselves of the being and eternal power of God; and these were so manifest in them thereby, that they could not but own them. Hereon they set their rational *discursive faculty* at work in the consideration of God and his being. But herein were they so vain and foolish, as to draw conclusions *directly contrary* unto the first principles of natural light, and the unavoidable notions which they had of the eternal being of God; Rom. i. 21—24. And many upon their pretended rational consideration of the *promiscuous event of things* in the world, have foolishly concluded that all

things had a *fortuitous beginning*, and have *fortuitous events*, or such as from a concatenation of antecedent causes are *fatally necessarily*, and are not disposed by an infinitely wise, unerring, holy providence. And this also, is directly *contradictory* unto the first principles and notions of natural light, whereby it openly proclaims itself not to be an effect of reason in its due exercise, but a mere delusion.

So if any pretend unto *revelations by faith*, which are contradictory unto the first principles of natural light, or reason in its proper exercise about its proper objects, it is a delusion. On this ground the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation is justly rejected; for it proposeth that as a revelation by faith, which is expressly contradictory unto our sense and reason in their proper exercise about their proper objects. And a supposition of the possibility of any such thing, would make the ways whereby God reveals and makes known himself, to cross and interfere one with another; which would leave us no certainty in any thing divine or human.

But yet as these means of divine revelation do *harmonize* and perfectly agree one with the other; so they are not *objectively equal*, or equally extensive, nor are they co-ordinate, but subordinate unto one another. Wherefore, there are many things discernible by reason in its exercise, which do not appear unto the first principles of natural light. So the sober philosophers of old attained unto many true and great conceptions of God, and the excellencies of his nature, above what they arrived unto, who either did not, or could not, cultivate and improve the principles of natural light in the same manner as they did. It is, therefore, folly to pretend that things so made known of God are not infallibly true and certain, because they are not obvious unto the first conceptions of natural light, without the due exercise of reason, provided they are not contradictory thereunto. And there are many things revealed unto faith that are above and beyond the comprehension of reason, in the best and utmost of its most proper exercise. Such are all the principal mysteries of Christian religion. And it is the height of folly to reject them, as some do, because they are not discernible and comprehensible by reason, seeing they are not contradictory thereunto. Wherefore, these ways of God's revelation of himself, are not equally extensive, or commensurate,

but are so subordinate one unto another, that what is wanting unto the one is supposed by the other, unto the accomplishment of the whole and entire end of divine revelation; and the truth of God is the same in them all.

(1.) The revelation which God makes of himself in the first way, by the *inbred principles of natural light*, doth sufficiently and infallibly evidence itself to be from him; it doth it in, unto, and by, those principles themselves. This revelation of God is infallible, the assent unto it is infallible, which the infallible evidence it gives of itself makes to be so. We dispute not now, what a few atheistical sceptics pretend unto, whose folly hath been sufficiently detected by others. All the sobriety that is in the world consents in this, that the *light of the knowledge of God*, in and by the inbred principles of our minds and consciences, doth sufficiently, uncontrollably, and infallibly, manifest itself to be from him, and that the mind neither is, nor can be possibly imposed on, in its apprehensions of that nature. And if the first dictates of reason concerning God, do not *evidence themselves* to be from God, they are neither of any use nor force; for they are not capable of being confirmed by external arguments; and what is written about them, is to shew their force and evidence, not to give them any. Wherefore, this first way of God's revelation of himself unto us is infallible, and infallibly evidenceth itself in our minds, according to the capacity of our natures.

(2.) The revelation that God maketh of himself, by the *works of creation and providence, unto our reason in exercise*, or the faculties of our souls as *discursive*, concluding rationally one thing from another, doth sufficiently, yea, infallibly evidence and demonstrate itself to be from him, so that it is impossible we should be deceived therein. It doth not do so unto the *inbred principles* of natural light, unless they are engaged in a *rational exercise*, about the means of the revelation made; that is, we must rationally consider the works of God, both of creation and providence, or we cannot learn by them what God intends to reveal of himself; and in our doing so we cannot be deceived. 'For the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead;' Rom. i. 20. They are clearly seen,

and therefore may be perfectly understood, as to what they teach of God, without any possibility of mistake. And wherever men do not receive the revelation intended in the way intended, that is, do not certainly conclude, that what God teaches by his works of creation and providence, namely, his eternal power and Godhead, with the essential properties thereof, infinite wisdom, goodness, righteousness, and the like, is certainly and infallibly so, believing it accordingly; it is not from any defect in the revelation, or its *self-evidencing* efficacy, but only from the depraved, vicious habits of their minds, their enmity against God, and dislike of him. And so the apostle saith, that they who rejected or improved not the revelation of God, did it, 'because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge;' Rom. i. 28. For which cause God did so severely revenge their natural unbelief, as is there expressed. See Isa. xlvi. 8. xliv. 15. 19, 20. That which I principally insist on from hence is, that the revelation which God makes of himself, by the works of creation and providence, doth not evidence itself unto the first principles of natural light, so as that an assent should be given thereunto, without the actual exercise of reason, or the discursive faculty of our minds about them; but thereunto it doth infallibly evidence itself. So may the Scripture have, and hath a *self-evidencing efficacy*, though this appear not unto the light of first natural principles, no nor to bare reason in its exercise. For,

(3.) Unto our *faith* God reveals himself by the *Scripture*, or his word which he hath *magnified above all his name;* Psal. cxxxviii. 2. that is, implanted on it more characters of himself and his properties, than on any other way, whereby he revealeth or maketh himself known unto us. And this revelation of God by his word, we confess, is not sufficient nor suited to *evidence itself* unto the *light of nature*, or the first principles of our understanding, so that by bare proposal of it to be from God, we should by virtue of them immediately assent unto it, as men assent unto self-evident natural principles, as that the *part is less than the whole*, or the like. Nor doth it evidence itself unto our *reason*, in its mere natural exercise, as that by virtue thereof, we can demonstratively conclude that it is from God, and that what is declared therein is certainly and infallibly true. It hath indeed such exter-

nal evidences accompanying it, as makes a great impression on reason itself. But the power of our souls whereunto it is proposed, is that whereby we can give an assent unto the truth, upon the testimony of the proposer, whereof we have no other evidence. And this is the principal and most noble faculty and power of our natures. There is an instinct in brute creatures, that hath some resemblance unto our inbred natural principles; and they will act that instinct, improved by experience, into a great likeness of reason in its exercise, although it be not so. But as unto the *power* or *faculty* of giving an assent unto things on witness or testimony, there is nothing in the nature of irrational creatures, that hath the least shadow of it or likeness unto it. And if our souls did want but this one faculty of *assenting unto truth upon testimony*, all that remains would not be sufficient to conduct us through the affairs of this natural life. This, therefore, being the *most noble faculty* of our minds, is that whereunto the highest way of divine revelation is proposed.

(4.) That our minds, in this especial case, to make our assent to be according unto the mind of God, and such as is required of us in a way of duty, are to be *prepared and assisted* by the Holy Ghost, we have declared and proved before. On this supposition, the revelation which God makes of himself by his word, doth no less evidence itself unto our minds, *in the exercise of faith*, to be from him, or gives no less infallible evidence, as a ground and reason why we should believe it to be from him, than his revelation of himself, by the works of creation and providence, doth manifest itself unto our minds in the exercise of reason to be from him, nor with less assurance than what we assent unto, in and by the *dictates of natural light*. And when God revealeth himself, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, by the things that are made, the works of creation, the heavens declaring his glory, and the firmament shewing his handy-work; the reason of men stirred up and brought into exercise thereby, doth infallibly conclude upon the evidence that is in that revelation, that there is a God, and he eternally powerful and wise, without any farther arguments to prove the revelation to be true. So when God by his word reveals himself unto the minds of men, thereby exciting and bringing forth faith into exercise, or the power of the soul to assent unto truth

upon testimony, that *revelation* doth no less *infallibly evidence* itself, to be divine or from God, without any external arguments to prove it so to be. If I shall say unto a man that the sun is risen, and shineth on the earth; if he question or deny it, and ask how I shall prove it; it is a sufficient answer to say, that it *manifesteth itself* in and by its own light: and if he add, that this is no proof to him, for he doth not discern it; suppose that to be so, it is a satisfactory answer, to tell him that he is blind; and if he be not so, that it is to no purpose to argue with him who *contradicts his own sense,* for he leaves no *rule* whereby what is spoken may be tried or judged on. And if I tell a man that the 'heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work,' or that the 'invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made;' and he shall demand how I prove it; it is a sufficient answer to say, that these things, in and by themselves, do manifest unto the *reason of every man in its due and proper exercise,* that there is an eternal, infinitely wise and powerful being, by whom they were caused, produced, and made; so as that whosoever knoweth how to use and exercise his reasonable faculty, in the consideration of them, their original, order, nature, and use, must necessarily conclude that so it is. If he shall say, that it doth not so appear unto him, that the being of God is so revealed by them; it is a sufficient reply, in case he be so indeed, to say he is *phrenetic,* and hath not the use of his *reason;* and if he be not so, that he argues in express contradiction unto his own reason, as may be demonstrated. This the Heathen philosophers granted. 'Quid potest,' saith Cicero, 'esse tam apertum tamque perspicuum, cum cœlum suspeximus, cœlestiaque contemplati sumus, quam esse aliquod numen præstantissimæ mentis, quo hæc reguntur; quod qui dubitat haud sane intelligo cur non idem sol sit, an nullus sit dubitare possit.' De Natura Deor. lib. 2. And if I declare unto any one, that the *Scripture is the word of God,* a divine revelation, and that it doth evidence and manifest itself so to be. If he shall say, that he hath the use and exercise of his sense and reason as well as others, and yet it doth not appear unto him so to be; it is as unto the present inquiry, a sufficient reply for the security of the authority of the Scriptures (though

other means may be used for his conviction) to say, that '*all men have not faith;*' by which alone the evidence of the divine authority of the Scriptures is discoverable; in the light whereof alone we can read those characters of its divine *extract,* which are impressed on it, and communicated unto it.

If it be not so, seeing it is a *divine revelation,* and it is our duty to believe it so to be, it must be either because our faith is not fitted, suited, nor able to receive such an evidence, suppose God would give it unto the revelation of himself by his word, as he hath done unto those by the light of nature and works of providence; or because God would not, or could not, give such an evidence unto his word as might manifest itself so to be. And neither of these can be affirmed without a high reflection on the wisdom and goodness of God.

That our faith is capable of giving such an assent is evident from hence, because God works it in us, and bestows it upon us for this very end. And God requireth of us that we should infallibly believe what he proposeth unto us, at least when we have infallible evidence that it is from him. And as he appointeth faith unto this end, and approveth of its exercise, so he doth both judge and condemn them who fail therein; 2 Chron. xx. 20. Isa. vii. 9. Mark xvi. 16. Yea, our faith is capable of giving an assent, though of another kind, more firm and accompanied with more assurance, than any is given by reason in the best of its conclusions. And the reason is, because the power of the mind to give assent upon testimony, which is its most noble faculty, is elevated and strengthened by the divine supernatural work of the Holy Ghost, before described.

To say that God either could not, or would not, give such a power unto the revelation of himself by his word, as to evidence itself to be so, is exceedingly prejudicial unto his honour and glory, seeing the everlasting welfare of the souls of men is incomparably more concerned therein than in the other ways mentioned. And what reason could be assigned why he should implant a less evidence of his divine authority on this than on them, seeing he designed far greater and more glorious ends in this than in them. If any one shall say the reason is, because this kind of divine revelation is not capable of receiving such evidences; it must be either

because there cannot be evident characters of divine authority, goodness, wisdom, power, implanted on it or mixed with it; or because an efficacy to manifest them cannot be communicated unto it. That both these are otherwise, shall be demonstrated in the last part of this discourse, which I shall now enter upon.

It hath been already declared, that it is the *authority and veracity of God, revealing themselves in the Scripture and by it, that is the formal reason of our faith, or supernatural assent unto it as it is the word of God.*

2. It remains only that we inquire, in the second place, into the way and means whereby they evidence themselves unto us, and the Scripture thereby to be the word of God, so as that we may undoubtedly and infallibly believe it so to be. Now because faith, as we have shewed, is an *assent upon testimony*, and consequently divine faith is an assent upon divine testimony. There must be some testimony or witness in this case whereon faith doth rest. And this we say is the testimony of the Holy Ghost, the author of the Scriptures, given unto them, in them, and by them. And this work or testimony of the Spirit may be reduced unto two heads, which may be distinctly insisted on.

(1.) The *impressions* or *characters* which are *subjectively* left in the Scripture and upon it, by the Holy Spirit its author, of all the divine excellencies or properties of the divine nature, are the first means evidencing that testimony of the Spirit which our faith rests upon; or they do give the *first evidence* of its divine original and authority, whereon we do believe it. The way whereby we learn the eternal power and deity of God, from the works of creation, is no otherwise but by those marks, tokens, and impressions of his divine power, wisdom, and goodness, that are upon them. For from the consideration of their subsistence, greatness, order, and use, reason doth necessarily conclude an infinite subsisting being, of whose power and wisdom these things are the manifest effects. These are clearly seen and understood by the things that are made; we need no other arguments to prove that God made the world, but itself. It carrieth in it and upon it the infallible tokens of its original. See to this purpose the blessed meditation of the psalmist; Psal. civ. throughout. Now there are greater and more

evident impressions of divine excellencies left on the written word from the infinite wisdom of the author of it, than any that are communicated unto the works of God, of what sort soever. Hence David comparing the works and the word of God, as to their instructive efficacy in declaring God and his glory, although he ascribe much unto the works of creation, yet doth he prefer the word incomparably before them; Psal. xix. 1—3. 7—9. cxlvi. 8, 9, &c. xix. 20. And these do manifest the word unto our faith to be his more clearly, than the other do the works to be his, unto our reason. As yet I do not know that it is denied by any, or the contrary asserted, namely, that God, as the immediate author of the Scripture, hath left in the very word itself evident tokens and impressions of his wisdom, prescience, omniscience, power, goodness, holiness, truth, and other divine infinite excellencies, sufficiently evidenced unto the enlightened minds of believers. Some, I confess, speak suspiciously herein; but until they will directly deny it, I shall not need farther to confirm it, than I have done long since in another treatise. And I leave it to be considered, whether (morally speaking) it be possible that God should immediately by himself, from the eternal counsels of his will reveal himself, his mind, the thoughts and purposes of his heart, which had been hidden in himself from eternity, on purpose that we should believe them, and yield obedience unto him according to the declaration of himself so made, and yet not give with it, or leave upon it any τεκμήριον, any infallible token, evidencing him to be the author of that revelation. Men who are not ashamed of their Christianity, will not be so to profess and seal that profession with their blood, and to rest their eternal concernments on that security herein which they have attained, namely, that there is that manifestation made of the glorious properties of God in and by the Scripture, as it is a divine revelation which incomparably excels in evidence all that their reason receives concerning his power from the works of creation.

This is that whereon we believe the Scripture to be the word of God with *faith divine and supernatural,* if we believe it so at all. There is in itself that evidence of its *divine original,* from the characters of divine excellencies left upon it by its author the Holy Ghost, as faith quietly rests in,

and is resolved into. And this evidence is manifest unto the meanest and most unlearned, no less than unto the wisest philosophers. And the truth is, if rational arguments and external motives were the sole ground of receiving the Scripture to be the word of God, it could not be, but that learned men and philosophers would have always been the forwardest and most ready to admit it, and most firmly to adhere unto it, and its profession. For whereas all such arguments do prevail on the minds of men, according as they are able aright to discern their force and judge of them, learned philosophers would have had the advantage incomparably above others. And so some have of late affirmed, that it was the wise, rational, and learned men, who at first most readily received the gospel; an assertion which nothing but gross ignorance of the Scripture itself, and all the writings concerning the original of Christianity, whether of Christians or Heathens, could give the least countenance unto; see 1 Cor. i. 23. 26. From hence is the Scripture so often compared unto light; called 'light,' 'a light shining in a dark place,' which will evidence itself unto all who are not blind, or do wilfully shut their eyes, or have their eyes 'blinded by the god of this world, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them;' which consideration I have handled at large elsewhere.

(2.) The Spirit of God evidenceth the *divine original and authority* of the Scripture, by the power and authority which he puts forth in it and by it over the minds and consciences of men, with its operation of divine effects thereon. This the apostle expressly affirms to be the reason and cause of faith; 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. 'If all prophesy, and there comes in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.' The acknowledgment and confession of God to be in them or among them, is a profession of faith in the word administered by them. Such persons assent unto its divine authority, or believe it to be the word of God. And on what evidence or ground of credibility they did so, is expressly declared. It was not upon the force of any external argu-

ments produced and pleaded unto that purpose. It was not upon the testimony of this or that, or any church whatever; nor was it upon a conviction of any miracles which they saw wrought in its confirmation. Yea, the ground of the faith and confession declared, is opposed unto the efficacy and use of the miraculous gifts of tongues; ver. 23, 24. Wherefore, the only evidence whereon they received the word and acknowledged it to be of God, was that divine power and efficacy, whereof they found and felt the experience in themselves. 'He is convinced of all, judged of all, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest,' whereon he falls down before it with an acknowledgment of its divine authority, finding the word to come upon his conscience with an irresistible power of conviction and judgment thereon. 'He is convinced of all, judged of all;' he cannot but grant that there is *θεῖον τι*, a divine efficacy in it, or accompanying of it. Especially his mind is influenced by this, that the 'secrets of his heart are made manifest by it.' For all men must acknowledge this to be an effect of divine power; seeing God alone is *καρδιογνώστης*, he who searcheth, knoweth, and judgeth the heart. And if the woman of Samaria believed that Jesus was the Christ, because he 'told her all things that ever she did;' John iv. 29. there is reason to believe that word to be from God, which makes manifest even the secrets of our hearts. And although I do conceive that by 'the word of God,' Heb. iv. 12. the living and eternal word is principally intended, yet the power and efficacy there ascribed to him is that which he puts forth by the word of the gospel. And so that word also, in its place and use, 'pierceth to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner,' or passeth a critical judgment 'on the thoughts and intents of the heart,' or makes manifest the secrets of men's hearts, as it is here expressed. Hereby then doth the Holy Ghost so evidence the divine authority of the word, namely, by that divine power which it hath upon our souls and consciences, that we do assuredly acquiesce in it to be from God. So the Thessalonians are commended, that they 'received the word not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually works in them that believe;' 1 Thess. ii. 15. It distinguisheth itself from the word of men, and evidences itself to be in-

deed the word of God by its effectual operation in them that believe. And he who hath this testimony in himself hath a higher and more firm assurance of the truth than what can be attained by the force of external arguments, or the credit of human testimony. Wherefore, I say, in general, that the Holy Spirit giveth testimony unto, and evinceth the divine authority of the word, by its powerful operations and divine effects on the souls of them that do believe. So that although it be weakness and foolishness unto others, yet, as is Christ himself unto them that are called, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

And I must say, that although a man be furnished with external arguments of all sorts, concerning the divine original and authority of the Scriptures; although he esteem his motives of credibility to be effectually persuasive, and have the authority of any or all the churches in the world to confirm his persuasion, yet if he have no experience in himself of its divine power, authority, and efficacy, he neither doth, nor can believe it, to be the word of God in a due manner, with faith divine and supernatural. But he that hath this experience hath that testimony in himself which will never fail.

This will be the more manifest, if we consider some few of those many instances, wherein it exerts its power, or the effects which are produced thereby.

The principal divine effect of the word of God is in the conversion of the souls of sinners unto God. The greatness and glory of this work we have elsewhere declared at large. And all those who are acquainted with it as it is declared in the Scripture, and have any experience of it in their own hearts, do constantly give it as an instance of the exceeding greatness of the power of God. It may be they speak not improperly, who prefer the work of the new creation before the work of the old, for the express evidences of almighty power contained in it, as some of the ancients do. Now, of this great and glorious effect, the word is the only instrumental cause, whereby the divine power operates and is expressive of itself. For we are 'born again, born of God, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which abideth for ever;' 1 Pet. i. 21. For of his own will doth God 'beget us with the word of truth;' James i.

18. The word is the seed of the new creature in us, that whereby our whole natures, our souls, and all their faculties, are changed and renewed into the image and likeness of God. And by the same word is this new nature kept and preserved; 1 Pet. ii. 2. and the whole soul carried on unto the enjoyment of God. It is unto believers 'an ingrafted word, which is able to save their souls;' James i. 21. 'The word of God's grace, which is able to build us up, and give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified;' Acts xx. 32. And that because it is the 'power of God unto salvation unto them that do believe;' Rom. i. 16. All the power which God puts forth and exerts in the communication of that grace and mercy unto believers, whereby they are gradually carried on and prepared unto salvation, he doth it by the word. Therein, in an especial manner, is the divine authority of the word evidenced by the divine power and efficacy given unto it by the Holy Ghost. The work which is effected by it in the regeneration, conversion, and sanctification of the souls of believers, doth evidence it infallibly unto their consciences, that it is not the word of man, but of God. It will be said, this testimony is private in the minds only of them on whom this work is wrought. And, therefore, do I press it no farther; but, he that 'believeth hath the witness in himself;' 1 John v. 10. Let it be granted, that all, who are really converted unto God by the power of the word, have that infallible evidence and testimony of its divine original, authority, and power in their own souls and consciences, that they thereon believe it with faith divine and supernatural, in conjunction with the other evidences before-mentioned, as parts of the same divine testimony, and it is all I aim at herein.

But yet, although this testimony be privately received (for in itself it is not so, but common unto all believers), yet is it ministerially pleadable in the church, as a principal motive unto believing. A declaration of the divine power which some have found by experience in the word, is an ordinance of God to convince others, and to bring them unto the faith. Yea, of all the external arguments that are, or may be pleaded to justify the divine authority of the Scripture, there is none more prevalent nor cogent, than this of its mighty efficacy in all ages on the souls of men, to change, convert, and re-

new them into the image and likeness of God, which hath been visible and manifest.

Moreover, there are yet other particular effects of the divine power of the word, on the minds and consciences of men, belonging unto this general work, either preceding or following of it, which are clearly sensible and enlarge the evidence. As,

(1.) The work of *conviction of sin* on those who expected it not, who desired it not, and who would avoid it, if by any means possible they could. The world is filled with instances of this nature; whilst men have been full of love to their sins, at peace in them, enjoying benefit and advantage by them, the word coming upon them in its power, hath awed, disquieted, and terrified them, taken away their peace, destroyed their hopes, and made them, as it were, whether they would or no, that is, contrary to their desires, inclinations, and carnal affections, to conclude, that if they comply not with what is proposed unto them in that word, which before they took no notice of, nor had any regard unto, they must be presently or eternally miserable.

Conscience is the territory or dominion of God in man, which he hath so reserved unto himself, that no human power can possibly enter into it, or dispose of it any wise. But in this work of *conviction of sin*, the word of God, the Scripture, entereth into the conscience of the sinner, takes possession of it, disposeth it unto peace or trouble by its laws or rules, and no otherwise. Where it gives disquietments, all the world cannot give it peace; and where it speaks peace, there is none can give it trouble. Were not this the *word of God*, how should it come thus to speak in his name, and to act his authority in the consciences of men as it doth? when once it begins this work, conscience immediately owns a *new rule*, a *new law*, a *new government*, in order to the judgment of God upon it and all its actions. And it is contrary to the nature of conscience to take this upon itself, nor would it do so, but that it sensibly finds God speaking and acting in it, and by it; see 1 Cor. xiv. 25, 26. An invasion may be made on the *outward duties* that conscience disposeth unto; but none can be so upon its *internal actings*. No power under heaven can cause conscience to think, act, or judge otherwise, than it doth by its immediate respect

unto God. For it is the mind's *self-judging* with respect unto God; and what is not so, is no act of conscience. Wherefore, to force an act of conscience, implies a contradiction. However it may be defiled, bribed, seared, and at length, utterly debauched; admit of a superior power, a power above or over itself, under God it cannot.

I know conscience may be prepossessed with prejudices; and by education, with the insinuation of traditions, take on itself the power of false, corrupt, superstitious principles and errors, as means of conveying unto it a sense of divine authority; so is it with the Mahometans, and other false worshippers in the world. But the power of those divine convictions, whereof we treat, is manifestly different from such prejudicate opinions. For where these are not imposed on men by artifices and delusions easily discoverable, they prepossess their minds and inclinations by traditions, antecedently unto any right judgment they can make of themselves or other things; and they are generally wrapt up and condited in their secular interests. The convictions we treat of, come from without, upon the minds of men, and that with a sensible power, prevailing over all their previous thoughts and inclinations. Those first affect, deceive, and delude the notional part of the soul, whereby conscience is insensibly influenced and diverted into improper respects, and is deceived as to its judging of the voice of God; these immediately principle the practical understanding and self-judging power of the soul. Wherefore, such opinions and persuasions are gradually insinuated into the mind, and are admitted insensibly without opposition or reluctancy, being never accompanied at their first admission with any secular disadvantage. But these divine convictions by the word befal men, some, when they think of nothing less, and desire nothing less; some, when they design other things, as the pleasing of their ears, or the entertainment of their company; and some that go on purpose to deride and scoff at what should be spoken unto them from it. It might also be added unto the same purpose, how confirmed some have been in their carnal peace and security, by love of sin, with innumerable inveterate prejudices; what losses and ruin to their outward concernments many have fallen into by admitting of their convictions; what force, diligence, and artifices, have

been used to defeat them, what contribution of aid and assistance hath there been from Satan unto this purpose; and yet against all, hath the divine power of the word absolutely prevailed, and accomplished its whole designed effect. See 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Jer. xxiii. 29. Zach. i. 6.

(2.) It doth it by the light that is in it, and that spiritual illuminating efficacy wherewith it is accompanied. Hence it is called a 'light shining in a dark place;' 2 Pet. i. 19. That light whereby God 'shines into the hearts' and minds of men; 2 Cor. iv. 4. 6. Without the Scripture all the world is in darkness. 'Darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness the people;' Isa. lx. 2. It is the kingdom of Satan filled with darkness and confusion. Superstition, idolatry, lying vanities, wherein men know not at all what they do, nor whither they go, fill the whole world; even as it is at this day. And the minds of men are naturally in darkness; there is a blindness upon them that they cannot see nor discern spiritual things, no not when they are externally proposed unto them, as I have at large evinced elsewhere. And no man can give a greater evidence that it is so, than he who denies it so to be. With respect unto both these kinds of darkness the Scripture is a light, and accompanied with a spiritual illuminating efficacy, thereby evidencing itself to be a divine revelation. For what but divine truth could recall the minds of men from all their wanderings in error, superstition, and other effects of darkness; which of themselves they love more than truth? All things being filled with vanity, error, confusion, misapprehensions about God and ourselves, our duty and end, our misery and blessedness; the Scripture, where it is communicated by the providence of God, comes in as a light into a dark place, discovering all things clearly and steadily, that concern either God or ourselves, our present or future condition; causing all the ghosts, and false images of things which men had framed and fancied unto themselves in the dark, to vanish and disappear. *Digitus Dei!* this is none other but the power of God. But principally it evinceth this its divine efficacy, by that spiritual saving light, which it conveys into and implants on the minds of believers. Hence there is none of them who have gained any experience by the observation of God's dealings with them, but shall, although they know not

the ways and methods of the Spirit's operations by the word, yea, can say, with the man unto whom the Lord Jesus restored his sight, 'One thing I know, that whereas I was born blind, now I see.' This power of the word, as the instrument of the Spirit of God for the communication of saving light and knowledge unto the minds of men, the apostle declares, 2 Cor. iii. 18. iv. 4. 6. By the efficacy of this power doth he evidence the Scripture to be the word of God. Those who believe, find by it a glorious supernatural light introduced into their minds, whereby they who before saw nothing in a distinct affecting manner in spirituals, do now clearly discern the truth, the glory, the beauty, and excellency of heavenly mysteries, and have their minds transformed into their image and likeness. And there is no person who hath the witness in himself of the kindling of this heavenly light in his mind by the word, but hath also the evidence in himself of its divine original.

(3.) It doth, in like manner, evidence its divine authority by the *awe*, which it puts on the minds of the *generality of mankind* unto whom it is made known, that they dare not absolutely reject it. Multitudes there are unto whom the word is declared, who *hate* all its precepts, *despise* all its promises, *abhor* all its threatenings, like nothing, approve of nothing, of what it declares or proposes, and yet dare not absolutely refuse or reject it. They deal with it as they do with God himself, whom they hate also, according to the revelation which he hath made of himself in his word. They wish he were not, sometimes they hope he is not, would be glad to be free of his rule, but yet dare not, cannot absolutely deny and disown him, because of that testimony for himself, which he keeps alive in them whether they will or no. The same is the frame of their hearts and minds towards the Scripture, and that for no other reason but because it is the word of God, and manifesteth itself so to be. They hate it, wish it were not, hope it is not true, but are not by any means able to shake off a disquiet in the sense of its divine authority. This testimony it hath fixed in the hearts of multitudes of its enemies ; Psal. xlv. 5.

(4.) It evidences its divine power in *administering strong consolations* in the deepest and most unrelievable distresses. Some such there are, and such many men fall into, wherein

all means and hopes of relief may be utterly removed and taken away. So is it when the miseries of men are not known unto any that will so much as pity them, or wish them relief; or, if they have been known, and there hath been an eye to pity them, yet there hath been no hand to help them. Such hath been the condition of innumerable souls, as on other accounts, so in particular under the power of persecutors; when they have been shut up in filthy and nasty dungeons, not to be brought out but unto death by the most exquisite tortures that the malice of hell could invent, or the bloody cruelty of man inflict. Yet in these and the like distresses doth the word of God by its divine power and efficacy break through all interposing difficulties, all dark and discouraging circumstances, supporting, refreshing, and comforting such poor distressed sufferers, yea, commonly filling them under overwhelming calamities 'with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Though they are in bonds, yet is the word of God not bound; neither can all the power of hell, nor all the diligence or fury of men, keep out the word from entering into prisons, dungeons, flames, and to administer strong consolations against all fears, pains, wants, dangers, deaths, or whatever we may in this mortal life be exposed unto. And sundry other instances of the like nature might be pleaded, wherein the word gives evident demonstrations unto the minds and consciences of men of its own divine power and authority; which is the second way whereby the Holy Ghost its author gives testimony unto its original.

But it is not merely the grounds and reasons whereon we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, which we designed to declare. The whole work of the Holy Spirit enabling us to believe them so to be was proposed unto consideration. And beyond what we have insisted on, there is yet a farther peculiar work of his, whereby he effectually ascertains our minds of the Scriptures being the word of God, whereby we are ultimately established in the faith thereof. And I cannot but both admire and bewail that this should be denied by any that would be esteemed Christians. Wherefore, if there be any necessity thereof, I shall take occasion, in the second part of this discourse, farther to confirm this part of the truth thus far debated; namely, *that God, by his Holy Spirit, doth secretly and effectually persuade and satisfy*

the minds and souls of believers in the divine truth and authority of the Scriptures, whereby he infallibly secures their faith against all objections and temptations whatsoever; so that they can safely and comfortably dispose of their souls in all their concernments, with respect unto this life and eternity, according unto the undeceivable truth and guidance of it. But I shall no farther insist on these things at present.

Three things do offer themselves unto consideration from what hath been discoursed.

1. What is the ground and reason why the meanest and most unlearned sort of believers do assent unto this truth, *that the Scriptures are the word of God,* with no less firmness, certainty, and *assurance* of mind, than do the wisest and most learned of them. Yea, oft-times the faith of the former sort herein is of the best growth, and firmest consistency against oppositions and temptations. Now, no *assent of the mind* can be accompanied with any more assurance, than *the evidence* whose effect it is, and which it is resolved into, will afford. Nor doth any evidence of truth beget an assent unto it in the mind, but as it is apprehended and understood. Wherefore, the evidence of this truth, wherein soever it consists, must be that which is perceived, apprehended, and understood, by the meanest and most learned sort of true believers. For, as was said, they do no less firmly assent and adhere unto it, than the wisest and most learned of them. It cannot, therefore, consist in such subtle and learned arguments whose sense they cannot understand or comprehend. But the things we have pleaded are of another nature. For those *characters* of divine wisdom, goodness, holiness, grace, and sovereign authority, which are implanted on the Scripture by the Holy Ghost, are as legible unto the faith of the meanest, as of the most learned believer. And they also are no less capable of an experimental *understanding* of the divine power and efficacy of the Scriptures in all its spiritual operations, than those who are more wise and skilful in discerning the force of *external arguments* and motives of credibility. It must, therefore, of necessity be granted, that the formal reason of faith consists in those things, whereof the evidence is equally obvious unto all sorts of believers.

2. Whence it is that the assent of faith, whereby we believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, is usually affirmed

to be accompanied with more *assurance* than any assent which is the effect of science upon the most demonstrative principles. They who affirm this, do not consider faith as it is in this or that individual person, or in all that do sincerely believe; but in its own nature and essence, and what it is meet and able to produce. And the schoolmen do distinguish between a *certainty* or *assurance of evidence*, and an *assurance of adherence*. In the latter they say the certainty of *faith* doth exceed that of science; but it is less in respect of the former. But it is not easily to be conceived how the certainty of adherence should exceed the certainty of evidence, with respect unto any object whatsoever. That which seems to render a difference in this case is, that the evidence which we have in things scientifical is speculative, and affects the mind only; but the evidence which we have by faith effectually worketh on the will also, because of the goodness and excellency of the things that are believed. And hence it is that the whole soul doth more firmly adhere unto the objects of faith upon that evidence which it hath of them, than unto other things whereof it hath clearer evidence, wherein the will and the affections are little or not at all concerned. And Bonaventure giveth a reason of no small weight, why faith is more certain than science, not with the certainty of speculation, but of adherence: 'Quoniam fideles Christiani, nec argumentis, nec tormentis, nec blandimentis adduci possunt, vel inclinari, ut veritatem quam credunt vel ore tenus negent; quod nemo peritus alicujus scientiæ faceret, si acerrimis tormentis cogeretur scientiam suam de conclusione aliqua geometrica vel arithmetica retractare. Stultus enim et ridiculus esset geometra, qui pro sua scientia in controversiis geometricis mortem auderet subire, nisi in quantum dictat fides, non esse mentiendum.' And whatever may be said of this distinction, I think it cannot modestly be denied, that there is a greater assurance in faith, than is in any scientifical conclusions; until as many good and wise men will part with all their worldly concernments, and their lives, by the most exquisite tortures, in the confirmation of any truth which they have received merely on the ground of reason acting in human sciences, as have so done on the certainty which they had by faith, that the Scripture is a divine revelation. For in bearing testimony hereunto, have innumerable multitudes

of the best, the holiest, and the wisest men that ever were in the world, cheerfully and joyfully sacrificed all their temporal, and adventured all their eternal, concernments. For they did it under a full satisfaction that in parting with all temporary things, they should be eternally blessed, or eternally miserable, according as their persuasion in faith proved true or false. Wherefore, unto the firmitude and constancy which we have in the assurance of faith, three things do concur.

(1.) That this *ability of assent upon testimony*, is the highest and most noble power or faculty of our rational souls; and, therefore, where it hath the highest evidence whereof it is capable, which it hath in the testimony of God, it giveth us the highest certainty or assurance, whereof in this world we are capable.

(2.) Unto the assent of divine faith there is required an *especial internal operation of the Holy Ghost*. This rendereth it of another nature than any mere natural act and operation of our minds. And, therefore, if the assurance of it may not properly be said to exceed the assurance of science in degree, it is only because it is of a more excellent kind, and so is not capable of comparison unto it as to degrees.

(3.) That the revelation which God makes of himself, his mind and will, by his word, is more *excellent*, and accompanied with greater evidence of his *infinitely glorious properties*, wherein alone the mind can find absolute rest and satisfaction (which is its assurance), than any other discovery of truth, of what sort soever, is capable of. Neither is the assurance of the mind *absolutely perfect* in any thing beneath the enjoyment of God. Wherefore, the soul by faith making the nearest approaches, whereof in this life it is capable, unto the eternal spring of being, truth, and goodness, it hath the highest rest, satisfaction, and assurance therein, that in this life it can attain unto.

3. It followeth from hence, that those that would deny either of those two things, or would so separate between them, as to exclude the *necessity* of either unto the duty of believing, namely, the *internal work* of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men, enabling them to believe, and the *external work* of the same Holy Spirit giving evidence in and by the Scripture unto its own divine original; do endeavour to ex-

pel all true divine faith out of the world, and to substitute a probable persuasion in the room thereof.

For a close unto this discourse, which hath now been drawn forth unto a greater length than was at first intended, I shall consider some objections that are usually pleaded in opposition unto the truth asserted and vindicated.

1. It is, therefore, objected, in the first place, that the plea hitherto insisted on cannot be managed without great disadvantage to Christian religion. For if we take away the *rational grounds,* on which we believe the doctrine of Christ to be true and divine, and the whole evidence of the truth of it be laid on things not only derided by men of *atheistical spirits,* but in themselves such as cannot be discerned by any but such as do believe, on what *grounds* can we proceed to convince an unbeliever?

Ans. 1. By the way, it is one thing to prove and believe the doctrine of Christ to be true and divine; another to prove and believe the Scripture to be given by inspiration of God, or the divine authority of the Scripture, which alone was proposed unto consideration. A doctrine true and divine may be written in and proposed unto us by writings that were not *divinely and infallibly inspired;* and so might the doctrine of Christ have been, but not without the unspeakable disadvantage of the church. And there are sundry arguments which forcibly and effectually prove the doctrine of Christ to have been *true and divine,* which are not of any efficacy to prove the divine authority of the Scriptures; though on the other hand, whatever doth prove the divine authority of the Scriptures, doth equally prove the divine truth of the doctrine of Christ.

2. There are two ways of *convincing unbelievers:* the one insisted on by the *apostles* and their *followers,* the other by some *learned men* since their days. The way principally insisted on by the apostles was by *preaching* the word itself unto them in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, by the power whereof manifesting the authority of God in it, they were convinced; and falling down acknowledged God to be in it of a truth; 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. xiv. 25, 26. It is likely that in this their proposal of the gospel, the doctrine and truths contained in it, unto unbelievers, that those of *atheistical spirits* would both deride them and it; and so indeed it came to pass,

many esteeming *themselves* to be *babblers* and their doctrine to be *errant folly*. But yet they desisted not from pursuing their work in the same way, whereunto God gave success. The other way is to prove unto *unbelievers* that the *Scripture is true and divine* by rational arguments, wherein some learned persons have laboured, especially in these last ages, to very good purpose. And certainly their labours are greatly to be commended, whilst they attend unto these rules. (1.) That they produce no arguments but such as are *cogent*, and not liable unto just exceptions. For if to manifest their own skill or learning they plead such reasons as are capable of an answer and solution, they exceedingly prejudice the truth by subjecting it unto dubious *disputations*, whereas in itself it is clear, firm, and sacred. (2.) That they do not pretend their rational grounds and arguments to be the sole foundation that faith hath to rest upon, or which it is resolved into. For this were the ready way to set up an opinion instead of faith supernatural and divine. Accept but of these two limitations, and it is acknowledged that the rational grounds and arguments intended may be rationally pleaded, and ought so to be, unto the conviction of gainsayers. For no man doth so plead the *self-evidencing power* of the Scripture, as to deny that the use of other external motives and arguments is necessary to stop the mouths of *atheists*, is also unto the farther establishment of them who do believe. These things are subordinate, and no way inconsistent.

The truth is, if we will attend unto our own, and the experience of the whole church of God, the way whereby we come to believe the Scripture to be the *word of God* ordinarily is this and no other. God having first given his *word* as the foundation of our faith and obedience, hath appointed the *ministry of men*, at first extraordinary, afterward ordinary, to propose unto us the doctrines, truths, precepts, promises, and threatenings contained therein; together with this proposition of them, they are appointed to declare that these things are not from *themselves*, nor of their own *invention;* 2 Tim. iii. 14—17. And this is done variously. Unto some the word of God in this *ministry* thus comes, or is thus proposed, preached, or declared, whilst they are in a condition not only utterly unacquainted with the mysteries of it, but filled with contrary apprehensions,

and consequently prejudices against it. Thus it came of old unto the *Pagan world,* and must do so unto such persons and nations as are yet in the same state with them. Unto these the first preachers of the gospel did not produce the *book of the Scriptures,* and tell them that it was the word of God, and that it would evidence itself unto them so to be. For this had been to despise the wisdom and authority of God in their own ministry. But they preached the doctrines of it unto them, grounding themselves on the divine revelation contained therein. And this proposition of the truth or preaching of the gospel was not *left of God* to work itself into the reasons of men by the suitableness of it thereunto; but being his *own institution* for their illumination and conversion, he accompanied it with divine power and made it effectual unto the ends designed; Rom. i. 16. And the event hereof among mankind was, that by *some* this *new doctrine* was derided and scorned, by *others* whose *hearts God opened to attend unto it,* it was embraced and submitted unto. Among those who after the propagation of the gospel are born, as they say, *within the pale of the church,* the same doctrine is variously instilled into persons according unto the several duties and concerns of others to instruct them. Principally the *ministry of the word* is ordained of God unto that end, whereon the church is the ground and pillar of truth. Those of both sorts unto whom the doctrine mentioned is preached or proposed, are directed unto the Scriptures as the sacred repository thereof. For they are told that these things come by *revelation* from God, and that revelation is contained in the *Bible,* which is his word. Upon this proposal, with inquiry into it and consideration of it, God cooperating by his Spirit, there is that evidence of its divine original communicated unto their minds through its power and efficacy, with the characters of divine wisdom and holiness implanted on it, which they are now enabled to discern, that they believe it and rest in it as the immediate word of God. Thus was it in the case of the woman of Samaria, and the inhabitants of Sychar, with respect unto their faith in Christ Jesus; John iv. 42. This is the way whereby men ordinarily are brought to believe the word of God; Rom. x. 14, 15. and that neither by external arguments or motives, which no one soul was ever converted unto God by, nor by

any mere naked proposal and offer of the book unto them, nor by miracles, nor by immediate revelation or private subjective testimony of the Spirit; nor is their faith a persuasion of mind, that they can give no reason of, but only that they are so persuaded.

2. But it will be yet farther objected, that if there be such clear evidences in the thing itself, that is, in the divine original and authority of the Scriptures, that none who freely use their reason can deny it; then it lies either in the naked proposal of the things unto the understanding; and if so, then every one that assents unto this proposition, *that the whole is greater than the part*, must likewise assent unto this that the Scripture is the word of God; or the evidence must not lie in the naked proposal, but in the efficacy of the Spirit of God in the minds of them unto whom it is proposed.

Ans. 1. I know no divine, ancient or modern, Popish or Protestant, who doth not assert that there is a work of the Holy Ghost on the minds of men necessary unto a due belief of the Scriptures to be the word of God. And the consideration hereof ought not by any Christian to be excluded. But they say not that this is the objective testimony or evidence on which we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, concerning which alone is our inquiry.

2. We do not dispute how far, or by what means, this proposition, *the Scripture is the word of God*, may be evidenced merely unto our reason; but unto our understanding as capable of giving an assent upon testimony. It is not said that this is a first principle of reason, though it be of faith, nor that it is capable of a *mathematical demonstration*. That the whole is greater than the part, is self-evident unto our reason upon its first proposal; but such none pretends to be in the Scripture, because it is a subject not capable of it. Nor do those who denying the self-evidence of the Scripture, pretend by their arguments for its divine authority to give such an evidence of it unto reason, as is in first principles, or *mathematical demonstrations*, but content themselves with that which they call a moral certainty. But it is by faith we are obliged to receive the truth of this proposition, which respects the power of our minds to assent unto truth upon testimony, infallibly on that which is infallible.

And hereunto it evidenceth its own truth, not with the same, but with an evidence and certainty of a higher nature and nobler kind than that of the *strictest demonstration* in things natural, or the most forcible arguments in things moral.

3. It will be objected, that if this be so, then none can be *obliged to receive the Scripture* as the word of God, who hath not faith, and none have faith but those in whom it is wrought by the Spirit of God, and thereinto all will be resolved at last.

Ans. 1. Indeed there is no room for this objection; for the whole work of the Spirit is pleaded only as he is the *efficient cause of believing*, and not the *objective*, or reason why we do believe. But,

2. We must not be ashamed to resolve all we do well, spiritually and in obedience to the command of God, unto the efficacious operation of the Holy Ghost in us, unless we intend to be ashamed of the gospel. But this still makes his *internal operation* to be the *efficient*, and not his *internal testimony* to be the formal, reason of our faith.

3. It is another question, whether all obligation unto duty is and must be proportionate unto our own strength without divine assistance, which we deny: and affirm that we are obliged unto many things by virtue of God's *command*, which we have no power to answer but by virtue of his *grace*.

4. Where the proposal of the Scripture is made in the way before described, those unto whom it is proposed are obliged to receive it as the word of God, upon the evidence which it gives of itself so to be. Yea, every real, true, divine revelation made unto men, or every proposal of the Scripture by divine providence, hath that evidence of its being from God accompanying of it, as is sufficient to *oblige them* unto whom it was made to believe it, on pain of his displeasure. If this were otherwise, then either were God obliged to confirm every particular divine revelation with a miracle (which as to its obligation unto believing wants not its difficulty), which he did not, as in many of the prophets; nor doth at this day at the first proposal of the gospel to the Heathen; or else when he requires faith and obedience in such ways as in his wisdom he judgeth meet, that is, in the ordinary ministry of the word, they are not obliged thereby, nor is it their sin to refuse a compliance with his will.

5. If this difficulty can be no otherwise avoided, but by affirming that the faith which God requires of us with respect unto his word, is nothing but a *natural assent* unto it upon rational arguments and considerations, which we have an ability for, without any spiritual aid of the Holy Ghost, or respect unto his testimony, as before described; which overthrows all faith, especially that which is divine. I shall rather ten thousand times allow of all the just consequences that can follow on the supposition mentioned, than admit of this relief. But of those consequences this is none, that any unto whom the Scripture is proposed are excepted from an obligation unto believing.

In like manner there is no difficulty in the usual objection which respects particular books of the Scripture, why we receive them as *canonical*, and reject others; as, namely, the *Book of Proverbs, and not of Wisdom;* of *Ecclesiastes, and not Ecclesiasticus*. For,

1. As to the books of the Old Testament, we have the canon of them given us in the New, where it is affirmed, that unto the *church of the Jews were committed the oracles of God:* which both confirms all that we receive, and excludes all that we exclude. And unto the New, there are no pretenders, nor ever were, to the least exercise of the faith of any.

2. All books whatever, that have either themselves pretended unto a divine original, or have been pleaded by others to be of that extract, have been, and may be from themselves, without farther help, evicted of falsehood in that pretence. They have all of them hitherto in matter or manner, in plain confessions, or other sufficient evidence, manifested themselves to be of a human original. And much danger is not to be feared from any that for the future shall set forth with the same pretence.

3. We are not bound to refuse the *ministry of the church*, or the advantages of providence whereby the Scripture is brought unto us, with the testimonies which either directly or collaterally any one part of it gives unto another. Although the Scripture be to be believed *for itself*, yet it is not ordinarily to be believed *by itself*, without the help of other means.

4. On these suppositions I fear not to affirm that there are on every *individual book of the Scripture*, particularly those

named, those divine characters and *criteria*, which are sufficient to difference them from all other writings whatever, and to testify their divine authority unto the minds and consciences of believers. I say of *believers*, for we inquire not on what ground unbelievers, or those who do not believe, do believe the word of God, nor yet directly on what outward motives such persons may be induced so to do. But our sole inquiry at present is, what the faith of them *who do believe* is resolved into. It is not, therefore, said that when our Lord Jesus Christ (for we acknowledge that there is the same reason of the first giving out of divine revelations, as is of the Scripture) came and preached unto the Jews, that those mere words, 'I am the light of the world,' or the like, had all this evidence in them or with them; for nothing he said of that kind may be separated from its circumstances; but supposing the testimonies given in the Scripture beforehand to his person, work, time, and manner of coming, with the evidence of the presence of God with him in the declaration that he made of his doctrine, and himself to be the Messiah, the Jews were bound to believe what he taught, and himself to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, and so did many of them upon his preaching only; John iv. 42. And in like manner they were bound to believe the doctrine of John Baptist, and to submit unto his institutions although he wrought no miracle, and those who did not, rejected the counsel of God for their good, and perished in their unbelief. But although our Lord Jesus Christ wrought no miracles to prove the Scripture then extant to be the word of God, seeing he wrought them among such only as by whom that was firmly believed; yet the wisdom of God saw it necessary to confirm his personal ministry by them. And without a sense of the power and efficacy of the divine truth of the doctrine proposed, miracles themselves will be despised; so they were by some who were afterward converted by the preaching of the word; Acts ii. 13. iii. 7, 8. or they will produce only a false faith, or a ravished assent upon an amazement, that will not abide; Acts viii. 13. 21.

APPENDIX.

A SUMMARY representation of the *nature* and *reason* of that faith wherewith we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, with some *attestations* given unto the substance of what hath been delivered concerning it, shall give a close to this discourse. As to the first part of this design, the things that follow are proposed.

I. Unto the inquiry, on what grounds, or for what reason, we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, many things are *supposed*, as on all hands agreed upon, whose demonstration or proof belongs not unto our present work. Such are,

1. The being of God, and his self-subsistence, with all the essential properties of his nature.

2. Our relation unto him and dependance on him, as our Creator, Benefactor, Preserver, Judge, and Rewarder, both as unto things temporal and eternal. Wherefore,

3. The τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, whatever may be known of God by the light of nature, whatever is manifest in or from the works of creation or providence, and necessary actings of conscience, as to the being, rule, and authority of God, is supposed as acknowledged in this inquiry.

4. That beyond the conduct and guidance of the light of nature, that men may live unto God, believe and put their trust in him, according to their duty, in that obedience which he requireth of them, so as to come unto the enjoyment of him, a supernatural revelation of his mind and will unto them, especially in that condition wherein all mankind are since the entrance of sin, is necessary.

5. That all those unto whom God hath granted divine revelations immediately from himself, for their own use, and that of all other men unto whom they were to be communicated, were infallibly assured that they came from God, and that their minds were no way imposed on in them.

6. That all these divine revelations, so far as they are any

way necessary to guide and instruct men in the true knowledge of God, and that obedience which is acceptable unto him, are now contained in the Scriptures, or those books of the Old and New Testament which are commonly received and owned among all sorts of Christians.

These things, I say, are supposed unto our present inquiry, and taken for granted; so as that the reader is not to look for any direct proof of them in the preceding discourse. But on these suppositions it is alleged and proved,

1. That all men unto whom it is duly proposed as such, are bound to believe this Scripture, these books of the Old and New Testament, to be the word of God; that is, to contain and exhibit an immediate, divine, supernatural revelation of his mind and will, so far as is any way needful that they may live unto him; and that nothing is contained in them, but what is of the same divine original.

2. The obligation of this duty of thus believing the Scripture to be the word of God, ariseth partly from the nature of the thing itself, and partly from the especial command of God. For it being that revelation of the will of God, without the knowledge whereof, and assent whereunto, we cannot live unto God as we ought, nor come unto the enjoyment of him, it is necessary that we should believe it unto those ends; and God requireth it of us, that so we should do.

3. We cannot thus believe it in a way of duty, but upon a sufficient evidence and prevalent testimony that so it is.

4. There are many cogent arguments, testimonies, and motives to persuade, convince, and satisfy unprejudiced persons, that the Scripture is the word of God, or a divine revelation, and every way sufficient to stop the mouths of gainsayers, proceeding on such principles of reason, as are owned and approved by the generality of mankind. And arguments of this nature may be taken from almost all considerations of the properties of God, and his government of the world, of our relation unto him, of what belongs unto our present peace, and future happiness.

5. From the arguments and testimonies of this nature, a firm persuasion of mind defensible against all objections, that the Scripture is the word of God, may be attained; and that such, as that those who live not in contradiction unto their own light and reason through the power of their lusts,

cannot but judge it their wisdom, duty, and interest to yield obedience unto his will as revealed therein.

6. But yet that persuasion of mind which may be thus attained, and which resteth wholly upon these arguments and testimonies, is not entirely that faith wherewith we are obliged to believe the Scripture to be the word of God in a way of duty. For it is not to be merely human, how firm soever the persuasions in it may be, but divine and supernatural, of the same kind with that whereby we believe the things themselves contained in the Scripture.

7. We cannot thus believe the Scripture to be the word of God, nor any divine truth therein contained, without the effectual illumination of our minds by the Holy Ghost. And to exclude the consideration of his work herein is to cast the whole inquiry out of the limits of Christian religion.

8. Yet is not this work of the Holy Spirit in the illumination of our minds, whereby we are enabled to believe in a way of duty with faith supernatural and divine, the ground and reason *why* we do believe, or the evidence *whereon* we do so, nor is our faith resolved thereinto.

9. Whereas, also, there are sundry other acts of the Holy Spirit in and upon our minds, establishing this faith against temptations unto the contrary, and farther ascertaining us of the divine original of the Scripture, or testifying it unto us; yet are they none of them severally, nor all of them jointly, the formal reason of our faith, nor the ground which we believe upon. Yet are they such as that as without the first work of divine illumination we cannot believe at all in a due manner; so without his other consequent operations we cannot believe steadfastly against temptations and oppositions. Wherefore,

10. Those only can believe the Scripture aright to be the word of God in a way of duty, whose minds are enlightened, and who are enabled to believe by the Holy Ghost.

11. Those who believe not are of two sorts, for they are either such as oppose and gainsay the word as a cunningly devised fable ; or such as are willing without prejudice to attend unto the consideration of it. The former sort may be resisted, opposed, and rebuked by external arguments, and such moral considerations as vehemently persuade the divine original of the Scripture, and from the same principles

may their mouths be stopped as to their cavils and exceptions against it. The other sort are to be led on unto believing by the ministry of the church in the dispensation of the word itself, which is the ordinance of God unto that purpose. But,

12. Neither sort do ever come truly to believe, either merely induced thereunto by force of moral arguments only, or upon the authority of that church by whose *ministry* the Scripture is proposed unto them to be believed. Wherefore,

13. The formal reason of faith *divine and supernatural*, whereby we believe the Scripture to be the word of God in the way of duty, and as it is required of us, is the authority and veracity of God alone, evidencing themselves unto our minds and consciences in and by the Scripture itself. And herein consisteth that divine testimony of the Holy Ghost, which as it is a testimony gives our assent unto the Scriptures the general nature of faith, and as it is a divine testimony gives it the especial nature of faith divine and supernatural.

14. This divine testimony given unto the divine original of the Scripture in and by itself, whereinto our faith is ultimately resolved, is evidenced and made known, as by the characters of the infinite perfections of the divine nature that are in it and upon it; so by the authority, power, and efficacy, over and upon the souls and consciences of men, and the satisfactory excellency of the truths contained therein, wherewith it is accompanied.

15. Wherefore, although there be many cogent external arguments whereby a moral steadfast persuasion of the divine authority of the Scriptures may be attained, and it be the principal duty of the true church in all ages to give testimony thereunto, which it hath done successively at all times since first it was intrusted with it; and so, although there be many other means whereby we are induced, persuaded, and enabled to believe it, yet is it for its own sake only, efficaciously manifesting itself to be the word of God, or upon the divine testimony that is given in it and by it thereunto, that we believe it to be so with faith divine and supernatural.

Corol. Those who either deny the necessity of an internal subjective work of the Holy Ghost enabling us to believe, or

the objective testimony of the Holy Spirit given unto the Scripture in and by itself, or do deny their joint concurrence in and unto our believing, do deny all faith properly divine and supernatural.

This being the substance of what is declared and pleaded for in the preceding treatise; to prevent the obloquy of some, and confirm the judgment of others, I shall add the suffrage of ancient and modern writers given unto the principal parts of it, and whereon all other things asserted in it do depend.

Clemens Alexandrinus discourseth at large unto this purpose; Stromat. 7. Ἔχομεν γὰρ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς διδασκαλίας τόν Κύριον, διά τε των προφητῶν, διά τε τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, καὶ διά τῶν μακαρίων ἀποστόλων, πολυτρόπως καὶ πολυμερῶς ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἰς τέλος ἡγούμενον τῆς γνώσεως. 'We have the Lord himself for the principle or beginning of doctrine, who by the prophets, the gospel, and blessed apostles, in various manners and by divers degrees goeth before us, or leads us unto knowledge.' [This is that which we lay down as the reason and ground of faith, namely, the authority of the Lord himself instructing us by the Scriptures.] So he adds; Τὴν ἀρχὴν δὲ εἴτις ἑτέρου δεῖσθαι ὑπολάβοι, οὐκέτ' ἄν ὄντως ἀρχὴ φυλαχθείη. Ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ πιστὸς, τῇ κυριακῇ γραφῇ τε καὶ φωνῇ ἀξιόπιστος εἰκότως ἄν διά τοῦ Κυρίου πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὐεργεσίαν ἐνεργουμένη· ἀμέλει πρὸς τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων εὕρεσιν αὐτῇ χρώμεθα κριτηρίῳ· τὸ κρινόμενον δὲ πᾶν, ἐτι ἄπιστον πρὶν κριθῆναι· ὥς ουδ' ὥστ' ἀρχὴ τὸ κρισέως δεόμενον. 'And if any one suppose that he needeth any other principle, the principle will not be kept' [that is, if we need any other principle whereinto to resolve our faith, the word of God is no more a principle unto us]. 'But he who is faithful from himself is worthy to be believed in his sovereign writing and voice, which as it appeareth is administered by the Lord for the benefit of men. And certainly we use it as a rule of judging for the invention of things. But whatever is judged, is not credible or to be believed until it is judged, and that is no principle which stands in need to be judged.' The intention of his words is, that God who alone is to be believed for himself, hath given us his word as the rule whereby we are to judge of all things. And this word is so to be believed, as not to be subject unto any other judgment; because if it be so it

cannot be either a principle or a rule. And so he proceeds; *Εἰκότως τοίνυν πίστει περιβαλόντες ἀναπόδεικτον τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκ περιουσίας, καὶ τὰς ἀπόδειξεις παρ' αὐτῆς τῆς ἀρχῆς περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς λαβόντες, φωνῇ Κυρίου παιδευόμεθα πρὸς τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας.* 'Wherefore, it is meet that embracing by faith the most sufficient indemonstrable principle, and taking the demonstrations of the principle from the principle itself, we are instructed by the voice of the Lord himself unto the acknowledgment of the truth.' In few words he declares the substance of what we have pleaded for. No more do we maintain in this cause, but what Clemens doth here assert; namely, that we believe the Scripture for itself, as that which needeth no antecedent or external demonstration; but all the evidence and demonstration of its divine original is to be taken from itself alone; which yet he farther confirms, *Οὐ γὰρ ἁπλῶς ἀποφαινομένοις ἀνθρώποις προσέχοιμεν, οἷς καὶ ἀνταποφαίνεσθαι ἐπ' ἴσης ἔξεστιν. Εἰ δ' οὐκ ἀρκεῖ μόνον ἁπλῶς εἰπεῖν τὸ δόξαν, ἀλλὰ πιστώσασθαι δεῖ το λεχθὲν, οὐ τὴν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀναμένομεν μαρτυρίαν, ἀλλά τῇ τοῦ Κυρίου φωνῇ πιστούμεθα τὸ ζητούμενον. Ἡ πάσων ἀποδείξεων ἐχέγγυωτέρα μᾶλλον δὲ, ἡ μόνη ἀπόδειξις οὖσα τυγχάνει.—οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀπ' αὐτῶν περὶ αὐτων τῶν γραφῶν τελείως ἀποδεικνύντες ἐκ πίστεως πειθόμεθα ἀποδεικτικῶς.*[a] 'For we would not attend or give credit simply to the definitions of men, seeing we have right also to define in contradiction unto them. And seeing it is not sufficient merely to say or assert what appears to be truth, but to beget a belief also of what is spoken, we expect not the testimony of men, but confirm that which is inquired about with the voice of the Lord, which is more full and firm than any demonstration, yea, which rather is the only demonstration.—Thus we, taking our demonstrations of the Scripture out of the Scripture, are assured by faith, as by demonstration.' And in other places, as Strom. 4. he plainly affirms that the way of Christians was to prove the Scripture by itself, and all other things by the Scripture.

[a] These passages from Clemens Alexandrinus, very incorrectly transcribed, (*πίστεως* for *διδασκαλίας*, *ἀναπάλεικλον* for *ἀναπόδεικτον*, *περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς* omitted, &c.) have been corrected. Vid. Clem. Alex. Op. Strom. lib. vii. cap. 16. ed. Oxon. 1715. pp. 890, 891. The Editor, however, takes this opportunity of stating, that he does not undertake, nor would it be possible, without a prodigious, and, at the same time, almost useless, expenditure of time and labour, and a boundless accumulation of books, to verify the numerous quotations of Dr. Owen from the fathers and schoolmen, and controversialists of a more recent period.

Basilius speaks to the same purpose on Psal. cxv. Πίστις, ἡ ὑπερ τὰς λογικὰς μεθόδους τὴν ψυχὴν εἰς συνκατάθεσιν ἕλκουσα. Πίστις, οὐχ ἡ γεωμετρικαῖς ἀνάγγαις, ἀλλ' ἡ ταῖς τοῦ πνεύματος ἐνεργείαις ἐκγινομένη.[b] 'Faith which draws the soul to assent above all methods of reasonings; faith which is not the effect of geometrical demonstrations, but of the efficacy of the Spirit.' The nature, cause, and efficacy of that faith whereby we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, are asserted by him.

Nemesius de Homin. cap. 2. Ἡ τῶν θείων λογιῶν διδασκαλία, τὸ πιστὸν ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς ἔχουσα διὰ τὸ θεόπνευστον εἶναι.[c] 'The doctrine of the divine oracles hath its credibility from itself, because of its divine inspiration.'

The words of Austin, though taken notice of by all, yet may here be again reported. Confess. lib. 2. cap. 3. 'Audiam et intelligam quo modo fecisti cœlum et terram. Scripsit hoc Moses, scripsit et abiit, transivit hinc ad te; neque enim nunc ante me est. Nam si esset, tenerem eum, et rogarem eum, et per te obsecrarem, ut mihi ista panderet, et præberem aures corporis mei, sonis erumpentibus ex ore ejus. At si Hebræa voce loqueretur, frustra pulsaret sensum meum, nec inde mentem meam quicquam tangeret. Si autem Latinè, scirem quid diceret, sed unde scirem an verum diceret? quod etsi hoc scirem num et ab illo scirem? Intus utique mihi, intus in domicilio cogitationis, nec Hebræa, nec Græca, nec Latina, nec barbara veritas, sine oris et linguæ organis, sine strepitu syllabarum diceret, verum dicit; at ego statim erectus confidenter illi homini tuo dicerem, verum dicis; cum ergo illum interrogare non possim, te quo plenus vera dixit, veritas, te Deus meus rogo, parce peccatis meis, et qui illi servo tuo dedisti hæc dicere, da et mihi hæc intelligere.'—'I would hear, I would understand how thou madest the heaven and the earth. Moses wrote this, he wrote it, and is gone hence to thee; for he is not now before me; for if he were, I would hold him, and ask him, and beseech him for thy sake, that he would open these things unto me, and I would apply the ears of my body to the sounds breaking forth from his mouth. But if he should use the Hebrew language, in vain should he affect my sense, for he would not at all touch my mind; if he should speak Latin, I should

[b] Op. ed. Bened. tom. i. p. 371. [c] Oxon. ed. 1671. p. 92.

know what he said; but whence should I know that he spake the truth? and if I should know this also, should I know it of him? Within me, in the habitation of my own thoughts, truth neither in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, nor any barbarous language, without the organs of mouth or tongue, without the noise of syllables, would say, He speaks the truth: and I being immediately assured or certain of it, would say unto that servant of thine, Thou speakest truth. Whereas, therefore, I cannot ask him, I ask thee, O truth, with which he being filled, spake the things that are true: O my God, I ask of thee; pardon my sins, and thou who gavest unto this thy servant to speak these things, give unto me to understand them.'

That which is most remarkable in these words, is, that he plainly affirms that faith would not ensue on the declaration of the prophets themselves if they were present with us, unless there be an internal work of the Holy Spirit upon our minds to enable us, and persuade them thereunto. And indeed he seems to place all assurance of the truth of divine revelations in the inward assurance which God gives us of them by his Spirit; which we have before considered.

The second Arausican council gives full testimony unto the necessity of the internal grace of the Spirit, that we may believe. Can. 7. 'Siquis evangelicæ prædicationi consentire posse confirmat, absque illuminatione et inspiratione Spiritus Sancti, hæretico fallitur Spiritu.'

To descend unto later times wherein these things have been much disputed, yet the truth hath beamed such light into the eyes of many, as to enforce an acknowledgment from them, when they have examined themselves about it. The words of Baptista Mantuanus are remarkable; De Patient. lib. 3. cap. 2. 'Sæpe mecum cogitavi, unde tam suadibilis sit ipsa Scriptura, unde tam potenter influat in animos auditorum, unde tantum habeat energiæ, ut non ad opinandum tantum, sed ad solide credendum omnes inflectat? Non est hoc imputandum rationum evidentiæ quas non adducit; non artis industriæ aut verbis suavibus ad persuadendum accomodatis quibus non utitur; sed vide an id in causa sit quod persuasi sumus eam a prima veritate fluxisse? sed unde sumus ita persuasi nisi ab ipsa? quasi ad ei credendum nos sui ipsius contrahat authoritas. Sed unde oro hanc authoritatem sibi vendicavit? neque enim vidimus nos Deum

concionantem, scribentem, docentem, tamen ac si vidissemus, credimus et tenemus a Spiritu Sancto fluxisse quæ legimus; forsan fuerit hæc ratio firmiter adhærendi, quod in ea veritas sit solidior quamvis non clarior; habet enim omnis veritas vim inclinativam, et major majorem, et maxima maximam; sed cur ergo non omnes credunt evangelio? *Respond.* Quod non omnes trahuntur a Deo. Sed longa opus est disputatione? firmiter sacris Scripturis ideo credimus quod divinam inspirationem intus accipimus.'—'I have often thought with myself whence the Scripture itself is so persuasive, from whence it doth so powerfully influence the minds of its hearers, that it inclines or leads them not only to receive an opinion, but surely to believe. This is not to be imputed to the evidence of reasons, which it doth not produce, nor unto the industry of art, with words smooth and fit to persuade, which it useth not; see then if this be not the cause of it, that we are persuaded that it comes from the first truth or verity. But whence are we so persuaded but from itself alone? as if its own authority should effectually draw us to believe it. But whence, I pray, hath it this authority? we saw not God preaching, writing, or teaching of it; but yet as if we had seen him, we believe and firmly hold, that the things which we read proceeded from the Holy Ghost. It may be this is the reason why we so firmly adhere unto it, that truth is more solid in it, though not more clear than in other writings; for all truth hath a persuasive power, the greater truth, the greater power, and that which is greatest the greatest efficacy of all. But why then do not all believe the gospel? *Ans.* Because all are not drawn of God. But what need is there of any long disputation? we therefore, firmly believe the Scriptures, because we have received a divine inspiration assuring of us.' And in what sense this is allowed hath been declared in the preceding discourse.

I shall close the whole with the testimony of them, by whom the truth which we assert is most vehemently opposed, when it riseth in opposition unto an especial interest of their own.

Two things there are which are principally excepted against in the doctrine of Protestants, concerning our belief of the Scripture. The first is with respect unto the Holy Spirit as the efficient cause of faith, for whereas they teach

that no man can believe the Scripture to be the word of God in a due manner and according unto his duty, without the real internal aid and operation of the Holy Ghost, however it be proposed unto him, and with what arguments soever the truth of its divine original be confirmed; this is charged on them as an error and a crime. And, secondly, whereas they also affirm that there is an inward testimony or witness of the Holy Spirit, whereby he assures and confirms the minds of men in the faith of the Scriptures with an efficacy exceeding all the persuasive evidence of outward arguments and motives; this also by some they are traduced for. And yet those of the Roman church who are looked on as most averse from that resolution of faith which most Protestants acquiesce in, do expressly maintain both these assertions.

The design of Stapleton, De Principiis Fidei, controver. 4. lib. 8. cap. 1. is to prove, 'impossibile esse sine speciali gratia, ac dono fidei divinitùs infuso, actum veræ fidei producere, aut ex veri nominis fide credere.' Which he there proves with sundry arguments, namely, 'that it is impossible to produce any act of faith, or to believe with faith rightly so called, without special grace, and the divine infusion of the gift of faith.' And Bellarmin speaks to the same purpose; 'Argumenta quæ articulos fidei nostræ credibiles faciunt, non talia sunt ut fidem omnino indubitatam reddant, nisi mens divinitùs adjuvetur.' De Grat. et lib. Arbit. lib. 6. cap. 3. 'The arguments which render the articles of our faith credible, are not such as produce an undoubted faith, unless the mind be divinely assisted.'

Melchior Canus, loc. Theol. lib. 2. cap. 8. disputes expressly to this purpose; 'Id statuendum est, authoritatem humanam et incitamenta omnia illa prædicta, sive alia quæcunque adhibita ab eo qui proponit fidem, non esse sufficientes causas ad credendum ut credere tenemur, sed præterea opus esse interiori causa efficiente, id est, Dei speciali auxilio moventis ad credendum.'—'This is firmly to be held, that human authority, and all the motives before mentioned, nor any other which may be used by him who proposeth the object of faith to be believed, are not sufficient causes of believing as we are obliged to believe; but there is moreover necessary an internal efficient cause moving us to believe, which is the especial help or aid of God.' And a little after

he speaks yet more plainly. 'Externæ igitur omnes et humanæ persuasiones non sunt satis ad credendum, quantumcunque ab hominibus competenter ea quæ sunt fidei proponantur; sed necessaria est insuper causa interior, hoc est, divinum quoddam lumen incitans ad credendum, et oculi quidam interiores Dei beneficio ad videndum dati.'—'Wherefore, all external human persuasions or arguments are not sufficient causes of faith, however the things of faith may be sufficiently proposed by men; there is, moreover, necessary an internal cause, that is, a certain divine light, inciting to believe, or certain internal eyes to see, given us by the grace of God.' Yea, all other learned men of the same profession do speak to the same purpose.

The other assertion also they do no less comply withal; 'Arcanum divini Spiritus testimonium prorsus necessarium est, ut quis ecclesiæ testimonio ac judicio circa Scripturarum approbationem credat,' saith Stapleton. 'The secret testimony of the Spirit is altogether necessary, that a man may believe the testimony and judgment of the church about the Scriptures.' And the words of Gregory de Valentia are remarkable. 'Cum hactenus ejusmodi argumenta pro authoritate Christianiæ doctrinæ fecerimus, quæ per seipsa satis prudentibus esse debeant, ut animum inducant velle credere; tamen nescio an non sit argumentum iis omnibus majus, quod qui vere Christiani sunt, ita se animo affectos esse, quod ad fidem attinet, sentiunt, ut præcipue quidem propter nullum argumentum, quod vel hactenus fecimus vel ratione similiter excogitari possit, sed propter aliud nescio quid, quod alio quodam modo et longe fortius quam ulla argumenta persuadet, ut ad firmiter credendum se intelligant.' Tom. 3. in Thom. Disp. 7. Qu. 1. punc. 4. sect. 2. Let any man compare these words with those of Calvin; Institut. lib. 1. cap. 7. sect. 5. which, as I remember, I have cited before, and he will know whence the sense of them was taken. 'Whereas,' saith he, 'we have hitherto pleaded arguments for the authority of Christian doctrine, which even by themselves ought to suffice prudent persons to induce their minds to belief, yet I know not whether there be not an argument greater than they all, namely, that those who are truly Christians do find or feel by experience their minds so affected in this matter of faith, that they are moved

(and obliged) firmly to believe, neither for any argument that we have used, nor for any of the like sort that can be found out by reason, but for somewhat else which persuades our minds in another manner, and far more effectually than any arguments whatever.' And to shew what he means by this internal argument and persuasion, he affirms elsewhere, that, 'Deus ipse imprimis est, qui Christianam doctrinam atque adeo Scripturam sacram veram esse, voce revelationis suæ et interno quodam instinctu et impulsu, humanis mentibus contestatur.'—'It is God himself, who by the voice of his revelation, and by a certain internal instinct and impulse, witnesseth unto the minds of men the truth of Christian doctrine, or of the Holy Scripture.'

These few testimonies have I produced amongst the many that might be urged to the same purpose, not to confirm the truth which we have pleaded for, which stands on far surer foundations; but only to obviate prejudices in the minds of some, who being not much conversant in things of this nature, are ready to charge what hath been delivered unto this purpose with singularity.

ΣΎΝΕΣΙΣ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΉ:

OR THE

CAUSES, WAYS, AND MEANS,

OF

UNDERSTANDING THE MIND OF GOD,

AS REVEALED IN HIS WORD, WITH ASSURANCE THEREIN:

AND

A DECLARATION OF THE PERSPICUITY
OF THE SCRIPTURES, WITH THE EXTERNAL MEANS OF
THE INTERPRETATION OF THEM.

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.—Psal. cxix. 18.
Give me understanding, and I shall live.—Ver. 144.

IMPRIMATUR,

Guil. Sill. May 13, 1678.

THE PREFACE.

I SHALL, in a few words, give the reader an account of the occasion and design of the small ensuing discourse. Some while since I published a treatise about the reason of faith, or the grounds whereon we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, with that faith which is our duty, and pre-required unto all other acceptable obedience. But although this be the first fundamental principle of supernatural religion, yet is it not sufficient unto any of the ends thereof (that we believe the Scripture to be a divine revelation), unless we understand the mind and will of God therein revealed. At least the knowledge and understanding of those things wherein our present duty and future state of blessedness or misery are immediately concerned, are no less indispensably necessary unto us, than is the belief of the Scripture to be the word of God. To declare the way and means whereby we may assuredly attain that understanding, is the design of the ensuing discourse; as those whereby we come infallibly to believe the Scripture with faith divine and supernatural, are the subject of the former. My principal scope in both hath been to manifest that such is the abundant goodness, wisdom, and grace, of God, in granting unto us the inestimable benefit of his word, that no persons whatever, shall or can come short of the advantage in-

tended by it, but through their own sinful negligence and ingratitude, the highest crimes in things of a spiritual and eternal concernment. For he hath given such convincing evidences of the procedure or emanation of the Scripture from himself, by the divine inspiration of the penmen thereof; and so plainly declared his mind and will therein, as unto the faith and obedience which he requires of any or all sorts of persons, in their various circumstances, that every one who takes care of his own present and eternal welfare, may, and shall, in the due use of the means by him appointed, and discharge of the duties by him prescribed, unto that end, with a due dependance on the aid and assistances, which he will not withhold from any who diligently seek him, infallibly attain that measure of the knowledge of his mind and will, with full assurance therein, as will be sufficient to guide him unto eternal blessedness. The same measure of divine knowledge is not required in all and every one, that they may live unto God, and come unto the enjoyment of him. The dispensation of God towards mankind in nature, providence, and grace, is an invincible spring of such variety among them, as will not allow a prescription of the same measures of knowledge unto all who have a consistency with divine wisdom and goodness; and a supposition of it would bring confusion into all the order of things and persons which is of divine constitution. Nor is it pretended that any one man may or can have, in the use of any means whatever, a full comprehension of all divine revelations in this life, nor perhaps of any one of them; or that all men, in the use of the same means prescribed unto them, shall

have the same conceptions of all things revealed. The Scripture was given for the use of the whole church, and that in all ages, states, and conditions, with respect unto that inconceivable variety of circumstances, which all sorts of causes do distribute the whole multitude of them into. Wherefore the wisdom of God therein, hath suited itself unto the instruction of every individual believer, unto the moment of his entrance into eternity. That any one of them, that any society of them, should have a perfect comprehension of the entire revelation of God, or a perfect understanding of the whole Scripture, and every part of it, with all that is contained therein, was never required of them in a way of duty, nor ever designed unto them in a way of privilege. For besides that he hath replenished it with unfathomable stores, unsearchable treasures of divine mysteries, wherein we cannot find out the Almighty unto perfection, and hath provided another state for the comprehension of that by sight, which is the object of adoration and admiration in believing; such knowledge is not necessary unto any, that they may lead the life of faith, and discharge the duties thereof, in all holy obedience unto God. Yea, such a knowledge and comprehension would be inconsistent with that state and condition wherein we are to walk with God, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, and during the continuance thereof. But the substance of what we plead for is, that such is the wisdom, goodness, and love of God towards mankind, in the grant that he hath made unto them of the revelation of himself, his mind and will in the Scripture, as that no one person doth or can fail from attaining all that under-

standing in it and of it, which is any way needful for his guidance to live unto God in his circumstances and relations, so as to come unto the blessed enjoyment of him, but by the sinful neglect of the means and duties prescribed by him for the attainment of that understanding, and want of a due dependance on those spiritual aids and assistances which he hath prepared for that end. By what ways and means he hath thus provided for the assurance and security of all men, in things of their eternal concernment, and what are those acts of his wisdom, power, and grace, which he exerts for that end, namely, that they may both believe the Scripture to be his word, and understand his mind revealed therein, both according unto what is required of them in a way of duty, so as in both they may be accepted with him, is the design of this and the other forementioned discourse to declare. And they are both of them principally intended for the use of the ordinary sort of Christians, who know it their concernment to be established in the truth of those things wherein they have been instructed. For they are frequently attacked with those questions, How do you know the Scripture to be the word of God? And what assurance have you that you understand any thing contained in them, seeing all sorts of persons are divided about their sense and meaning, nor do you pretend unto any immediate inspiration to give you assurance? And if on these insnaring inquiries they are cast under any doubts or perplexities in their minds, as it often falls out amongst them who have not diligently weighed the principles of their own profession, the next insinuation is, that they ought to betake themselves either to

some other present guide, as their own light and reason, or make a complete resignation of themselves and the conduct of their souls unto the pretended authority and guidance of other men. To give assurance and security unto their minds, that they neither are nor can be deceived in the belief of the Scriptures to be the word of God, and the understanding of his mind and will therein, so far as their present obedience and eternal happiness are concerned, and that unto this end they need not be beholding unto any, nor depend on any but God himself, in the use of known and obvious means or duties, is designed in these small treatises. And upon the principles evinced and confirmed in them, I have yet proposed a farther inquiry, namely, What conduct in these times of great contests about the assurance of faith, and the causes of it, every one that takes care of his own salvation, ought to betake himself unto, that he may not be deceived nor miscarry in the end? And this is designed with especial respect unto the church of Rome, which vehemently pretends unto the sole infallible conduct in these things. But probably the near approach of the daily expected and earnestly desired hour of my discharge from all farther service in this world, will prevent the accomplishment of that intention. In the continual prospect hereof do I yet live and rejoice, which, among other advantages unspeakable, hath already given me an unconcernment in those oppositions, which the passions or interests of men engage them in, of a very near alliance unto, and scarce distinguishable from, that which the grave will afford. I have but one thing more to acquaint the reader withal, wherewith I shall close this preface,

and it is the same with that wherewith the preface unto the former discourse is concluded. This also belongeth unto the second part of my discourse, concerning the Dispensation and Operations of the Holy Spirit. The first volume on that subject, some years since published, having found good acceptance among them that are godly and learned, both at home and abroad, I have been desired to give out what yet remaineth for the complete accomplishment of what I had designed thereon, in this way of lesser discourses, that may have their use, before the whole be finished, or whether ever it be so or no.

ΣΎΝΕΣΙΣ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΉ.

CHAP. I.

Usurpation of the church of Rome, with reference unto the interpretation of the Scripture, or right understanding of the mind of God therein. Right and ability of all believers as to their own duty herein asserted. Importance of the truth proposed. The main question stated. The principal efficient cause of the understanding which believers have in the mind and will of God as revealed in the Scriptures, the Spirit of God himself. General assertions to be proved. Declared in sundry particulars. Inferences from them.

Our belief of the Scriptures to be the word of God, or a divine revelation, and our understanding of the mind and will of God as revealed in them, are the *two springs* of all our interest in Christian religion. From them are all those streams of light and truth derived, whereby our souls are watered, refreshed, and made fruitful unto God. It concerneth us, therefore, greatly to look well to those *springs*, that they be neither stopped nor defiled, and so rendered useless unto us. Though a man may have pleasant streams running by his habitation, and watering his inheritance, yet if the springs of them be in the power of others, who can either divert their course or poison their waters, on their pleasure he must always depend for the benefit of them.

Thus hath it fallen out in the world in this matter; so hath the *church of Rome* endeavoured to deal with all Christians. Their main endeavour is to seize those *springs* of religion into their own power. The Scripture itself, they tell us, cannot be believed to be the word of God, with faith divine, but upon the proposal and testimony of their church; thereby is one *spring* secured. And when it is believed so to be, it *ought* not to be interpreted, it *cannot* be understood, but according to the mind, judgment, and exposition, of the same

church; which in like manner secures the other. And having of old possessed these *springs* of Christian religion, they have dealt with them according as might be expected from unjust invaders of other men's rights, and *malæ fidei possessoribus*. So when the Philistines contended for the wells which Abraham and Isaac had digged, when they had got possession of them, they stopped them up. And when the Scribes and Pharisees had gotten the *key of knowledge*, they would neither enter into the kingdom of God themselves, nor suffer those that would, so to do; as our Saviour tells us. For the one of these *springs*, which is the letter of the Scripture itself, when it ought to have gone forth like the *waters of the sanctuary*, to refresh the church and make it fruitful unto God, they partly stopped it up, and partly diverted its course, by shutting it up in an *unknown tongue*, and debarring the people from the use of it. And in the exercise of their pretended right unto the other *spring*, or the *sole interpretation* of the Scripture, they have poisoned the streams with all manner of errors and delusions, so as that they became not only useless, but noxious and pernicious unto the souls of men. For under the pretence hereof, namely, that their church hath the *sole power of interpreting the Scriptures*, and *cannot err* therein, have they obtruded all their errors with all their abominations in worship and practice on the minds and consciences of men.

The first of these *springs* I have in a former discourse on this subject taken out of their hand, so far as we ourselves are concerned therein, or I have vindicated the just rights of all Christians thereunto, and given them possession thereof. This I did, by declaring the true grounds and reasons whereon we do, and whereon any can, truly *believe the Scripture to be the word of God*, with faith divine and supernatural. For besides other advantages wherewith the knowledge of that truth is accompanied; it dispossesseth the Romanists of their claim unto this fountain of religion, by evidencing that we do and ought thus to believe the divine original of the Scripture, without any regard to the testimony or authority of their church.

That which now lieth before us, is the vindication of the right of all believers unto the *other spring also*, or a right understanding of the mind and will of God, as revealed in

the Scripture, suitably unto the duty that God requireth of them in their several capacities and conditions.

What is necessary unto the *interpretation of difficult places* and passages in the Scripture, what measure of understanding of the mind and will of God as revealed therein, is required of persons in their various conditions, as they are teachers of others, or among the number of them that are to be taught; shall, among other things, be afterward spoken unto. My principal design is to manifest, That *every believer may, in the due use of the means appointed of God for that end, attain unto such a full assurance of understanding in the truth, or all that knowledge of the mind and will of God revealed in the Scripture, which is sufficient to direct him in the life of God, to deliver him from the dangers of ignorance, darkness, and error, and to conduct him unto blessedness.* Wherefore, as unto the belief of the Scripture itself, so as unto the understanding, knowledge, and faith of the things contained therein, we do not depend on the *authoritative interpretation* of any church or person whatever. And although ordinary believers are obliged to make diligent and conscientious use of the *ministry of the church* among other things, as a means appointed of God to lead, guide, and instruct them in the knowledge of his mind and will revealed in the Scripture, which is the principal end of that ordinance; yet is not their understanding of the truth, their apprehension of it, and faith in it, to rest upon, or to be resolved into, their authority, who are not appointed of God to be *lords of their faith*, but *helpers of their joy*. And thereon depends all our interest in that great promise, that we *shall be all taught of God*. For we are not so, unless we do learn from him, and by him, the things which he hath revealed in his word.

And there is not any truth of greater importance for men to be established in. For unless they have a *full assurance of understanding in themselves*, unless they hold their persuasion of the sense of Scripture revelations from God alone, if their spiritual judgment of truth and falsehood depend on the authority of men, they will never be able to undergo any suffering for the truth, or to perform any duty unto God in a right manner. The truths of the gospel, and the ways of religious worship, for which any believer may be called to suffer in this world, are such as about *whose sense* and *re-*

velation in the Scripture, there is great difference and controversy among men. And if there be not an assured, yea, infallible way and means of communicating unto all believers, a knowledge of the mind and will of God in the Scripture, concerning those things so controverted, the grounds whereof are fixed in their own minds, but that they do not wholly depend on the expositions and *interpretations* of other men, be they who they will, they cannot *suffer* for them either cheerfully or honourably, so as to give glory to God, or to obtain any solid peace and comfort in their own souls. For if a man under his *sufferings* for his profession, can give himself no other account but this, That what he suffers for, is the truth of God revealed in the Scripture, because such or such whom he hath in veneration or esteem do so affirm, and have so instructed him; or, because this is the doctrine of this or that church, the *papal* or the *reformed church,* which it hath prescribed unto him: he will have little joy of his suffering in the end. Yea, there is that which is yet worse in this matter as things are stated at this day in the world. Truth and error are promiscuously *persecuted* according unto the judgment, interest, and inclinations, of them that are in power. Yea, sometimes both truth and error are persecuted in the same place, and at the same time, upon errors differing from both. Dissent is grown almost all that is criminal in Christian religion all the world over. But in this state of things, unless we grant men an immediate *understanding of their own* in the mind and will of God, yea, a *full assurance* therein, there will be nothing whereby a man who suffers for the most important truths of the gospel, can, in his own soul and conscience, distinguish himself from those who suffer, in giving testimony unto the most pernicious errors; for all outward means of confidence which he hath, they may have also.

It behoveth, therefore, all those who may possibly be called *to suffer for the truth* in any season, or on any occasion, to assure their minds in this fundamental truth; that they may have in themselves a certain undeceiving understanding of the mind and will of God, as revealed in the Scripture, independent on the authority of any church or persons whatsoever; the use of whose ministry herein we do yet freely and fully allow.

Nor, indeed, without a supposition hereof, can any man perform any duty to God, in an acceptable manner, so as that his obedience may be the *obedience of faith*, nor can upon good grounds die in peace, since the *just shall live by his own faith alone.*

Wherefore, our present inquiry is;

How believers, or any men whatever, may attain a right understanding in their own minds, of the meaning and sense of the Scriptures, as to the doctrine or truths contained in them, in answer unto the design of God, as unto what he would have us know or believe; or,

How they may attain a right perception of the mind of God in the Scripture, and what he intends in the revelation of it, in opposition unto ignorance, errors, mistakes, and all false apprehensions; and so in a right manner to perform the duties which by them we are instructed in.

In answer unto the inquiry proposed concerning the knowledge and understanding of believers in the mind of God, as revealed in the Scriptures; I shall consider,

First, The *principal efficient cause.* And,

Secondly, *All the means,* internal and external, which are appointed of God thereunto.

As to the first of these, or the principal efficient cause of the due knowledge and understanding of the will of God in the Scripture, it is the *Holy Spirit of God himself alone.* For,

There is an especial work of the Spirit of God on the minds of men, communicating spiritual wisdom, light, and understanding unto them, necessary unto their discernment and apprehending aright the mind of God in his word, and the understanding of the mysteries of heavenly truth containd therein; and I shall add hereunto; that among all the false and foolish imaginations that ever Christian religion was attacked or disturbed withal, there never was any, there is none, more pernicious than this, That the mysteries of the gospel are so exposed unto the common reason and understanding of men, as that they may know them and comprehend them in a *useful manner,* and *according to their duty,* without the effectual aid and assistance of the Spirit of God.

It is the fondest thing in the world to imagine, that the Holy Ghost doth any way teach us, but *in and by our own*

reasons and understandings. We renounce all *enthusiasms* in this matter, and plead not for any immediate *prophetical inspirations*. Those who would prohibit us the use of our reason in the things of religion, would deal with us as the Philistines did with Samson, first put out our eyes, and then make us grind in their mill. Whatever we know, be it of what sort it will, we know it in and by the use of our reason, and what we conceive, we do it by our own understanding. Only the inquiry is, whether there be not an especial work of the Holy Spirit of God, *enlightening our minds*, and enabling our understandings to perceive and apprehend his mind and will as revealed in the Scripture, and without which we cannot so do. The substance, therefore, of the ensuing discourse, may be reduced unto these heads.

I. That we stand not in need of any new divine *afflations*, or immediate *prophetical inspirations*, to enable us to understand the Scripture, or the mind and will of God as revealed therein. Neither did the prophets or holy penmen of the Scripture *learn the mind of God* in the revelations made unto them, and by them unto the church, merely from the *divine inspiration* of them. Those immediate inspirations unto them, were in the stead and place of the *written word*, and no otherwise. After they did receive them, they were by the same means to inquire into the mind and will of God in them, as we do it in and by the written word; 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.

II. That as to the right understanding of the mind of God in the Scripture, or our coming unto the *riches of the full assurance of understanding in the acknowledgment of the mystery of God;* we do not, nor need to, depend on the *authoritative instruction* or interpretation of the Scripture by *any church* whatever, or all of them in the world, though there be great use of the true ministry of the church unto that end.

III. That in the *mere exercise of our own natural reason and understanding*, with the help of external means, we cannot attain that knowledge of the mind and will of God in the Scripture, of the sense and meaning of the Holy Ghost therein, which is required of us in a way of duty, without the special aid and assistance of the Holy Spirit of God. Wherefore, principally, it is asserted,

IV. That there is an especial work of the Holy Spirit in the *supernatural illumination* of our minds, needful unto the end proposed; namely, that we may aright, and according unto our duty, understand the mind of God in the Scripture ourselves, or interpret it unto others.

V. That hereby alone is that full *assurance of understanding in the knowledge of the mystery of God,* his truth and grace to be obtained, whereby any man may answer the mind and will of God, or comply with his own duty in all that he may be called to do or suffer in this world, in his especial circumstances. Wherefore,

VI. The certainty and assurance that we may have and ought to have of our right understanding the mind of God in the Scripture, either in general, or as to any especial doctrine, doth not depend upon, is not resolved into, any *immediate inspiration or enthusiasm;* it doth not depend upon nor is resolved into the *authority of any church* in the world; nor is it the *result of our reason and understanding* merely in their natural actings, but as they are elevated, enlightened, guided, conducted, by an internal efficacious work of the Spirit of God upon them.

VII. That whereas the means of the right interpretation of the Scripture, and understanding of the mind of God therein, are of two sorts: first, such as are prescribed unto us in a way of duty, as *prayer, meditation* on the word itself, and the like; and, secondly, *disciplinary,* in the accommodation of *arts and sciences* with all kind of learning unto that work; the first sort of them doth entirely depend on a supposition of the spiritual aids mentioned, without which they are of no use; and the latter is not only consistent therewith, but singularly subservient thereunto; wherefore the nature and use of all these means shallbe afterward declared.

This being the substance of what is designed in the ensuing discourse, it is evident, that the positions before laid down concerning the *especial work* of the Spirit on the minds of men, in communicating spiritual wisdom, light, and knowledge unto them, is in the first place and principally to be confirmed, as that whereon all the other assertions do absolutely depend.

It is the Scripture itself alone from whence the truth in this matter can be learned; and by which alone what is pro-

posed concerning it must be tried; therefore, as unto this first part of this work I shall do little more than plead the express testimonies thereof. When we come to consider the way and manner of the communication of these spiritual aids unto us, the whole matter will be more fully stated, and such objections as may be laid against our assertion be removed out of the way.

And there are two ends designed in this undertaking.

First, That which the evangelist Luke proposed in his writing the Gospel unto Theophilus; namely, 'That he might know the certainty of the things wherein he had been instructed;' Luke i. 4. When we have been instructed in the truth of the gospel, and do give our assent thereunto, yet it is needful that we should examine the grounds and reasons of what we do believe thereon, that we may have a *certainty* or *full assurance* of them. This therefore we shall direct; namely, How a man may come to an *undeceiving persuasion and full assurance* that the things wherein he hath been instructed, and which he knows, are true and according to the mind of God, so as that he may thereon be 'no more tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.'

Secondly, We design to inquire what *conduct* unto this end a man that takes care of his salvation, and who is convinced that he must give an account of himself unto God, ought in this matter, as to the right understanding of the mind and will of God in the Scripture, *to betake himself unto.* And as I shall shew that there is no safety in depending on *enthusiasms,* or immediate pretended infallible inspirations; nor on the *pretended infallibility* of any church: *so the Holy Spirit of God enlightening our minds in the exercise of our own reason or understanding, and in use of the means appointed of God unto that end, is the only safe guide to bring us unto the full assurance of the mind and will of God as revealed in the Scripture.*

Wherefore, the whole foundation of this work lies in these two things:

1. That there is such an *especial work* of the Holy Spirit on our minds, enabling them to understand the Scriptures in a right manner, or to know the mind of God in them.

2. In shewing what is the *especial nature* of this work, what are the effects of it upon our minds, and how it differs from all *enthusiastical inspirations*, and what is the true exercise of our minds in compliance therewith; and these things we shall first inquire into.

CHAP. II.

The general assertion confirmed with testimonies of the Scripture. Psal. cxix. 18. *opened at large. Objections answered;* 2 Cor. iii. 13—18. *explained.* Isa. xxv. Luke i. 24. 45. *opened.* Eph. i. 17—19. *explained and pleaded, in confirmation of the truth.* Hos. xiv. 9.

The whole of our assertion is comprised in the prayer of the psalmist; Psal. cxix. 18. גל־עיני ואביטה נפלאות מתורתך 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law.' The same request for the substance of it is repeated sundry times in the same Psalm, ver. 33, 34, &c. *Thus* he prayed; That it may be esteemed our duty to pray in *like manner*, is the substance of what we plead for. What we pray for from God, that we have not in and of ourselves; as the ancient church constantly pleaded against the Pelagians. And what we pray for according to the mind of God, that we do receive. Wherefore, our discerning, our understanding, of the wonderful things of the law, is not of ourselves; it is that which is given us, that which we receive from God.

But that the force of our argument from this testimony may be the more evident, the words or terms of it must be explained, that we may see whether they be equivalent unto, or of the same signification with, them laid down in our assertion.

1. That which is the *object* of the understanding prayed for, that in the knowledge whereof the psalmist would be illuminated, is תורה. The word signifies instruction; and being referred unto God, it is his teaching or instruction of us by the revelation of himself, the same which we intend by the Scripture. When the books of the Old Testament were completed, they were, for distinction-sake, distributed into כתובים תורה — and נבואים — or the 'Law,' the 'Psalms,' and

the 'Prophets;' Luke xxiv. 44. Under that distribution *Torah* signifies the five books of Moses. But whereas these books of Moses were, as it were, the foundation of all future revelations under the Old Testament, which were given in the explication thereof: all the writings of it are usually called 'the Law;' Isa. viii. 20. By the *law*, therefore, in this place, the psalmist understands all the books that were then given unto the church by revelation for the rule of its faith and obedience. And that by the *law*, in the psalms, the written law is intended, is evident from the first of them, wherein he is declared blessed, who 'meditateth therein day and night;' Psal. i. 2. which hath respect unto the command of reading and meditating on the *books thereof* in that manner; Josh. i. 8. That, therefore, which is intended by this word, is the entire revelation of the will of God, given unto the church for the rule of its faith and obedience; that is, the Holy Scripture.

2. In this law there are נפלאות—'wonderful things:' פלא —signifies to be 'wonderful,' to be 'hidden,' to be 'great' and 'high:' that which men by the use of reason cannot attain unto or understand. Hence נפלאות—are things that have such an impression of divine wisdom and power upon them, as that they are justly the object of our admiration. That which is too hard for us; as Deut. xvii. 8. כי יפלא ממך דבר—'If a matter be too hard for thee,' hid from thee. And it is the name whereby the miraculous works of God are expressed; Psal. lxxvii. 11. lxxviii. 11. Wherefore, these wonderful things of the law, are those expressions and effects of divine wisdom in the Scripture, which are above the natural reason and understandings of men to find out and comprehend. Such are the mysteries of divine truth in the Scripture; especially, because Christ is in them, whose name is פלא, or 'wonderful;' Isa. ix. 6. For all the great and marvellous effects of infinite wisdom meet in him. These things and doctrines God calls רבו תורתי, Hos. viii. 12. 'I have written unto him the great things of my law; and they were counted by them כמו זר—as a strange thing.' Because they were 'wonderful' in themselves, they neglected and despised them, as that which was foreign and *alien* from them, which belonged not unto them So deal many with the mysteries of the gospel at this day; because they are

heavenly, spiritual, in themselves marvellous, hidden, and above the understanding of the natural reason of men; that is, they are נפלאות—they reject and despise them as things *alien* and foreign unto their religion. Wherefore, the 'wonderful things' of the Scripture, are those mysteries of divine truth, wisdom, and grace, that are revealed and contained therein, with their especial respect unto Jesus Christ.

3. Three things are supposed in the words concerning these wonderful things:

(1.) That they are *recorded,* laid up or treasured, in the law or Scripture, and nowhere else; so as that from thence alone, are they to be learned and received. 'Behold wonderful things out of the law.' That alone is the sacred παρακαταθήκη, or repository of them. There are wondrous things in the works of nature and providence; and much of them is contained in the treasury of reason, wherein it may be discerned. But these are stored in the law only, and nowhere else.

(2.) That it is our duty to *behold,* to *discern,* to *understand* them, to have an inspection into them, and our great privilege when we are enabled so to do. This makes the psalmist pray so frequently, so fervently, that he may have the discerning of them, or come to an acquaintance with them. Those, therefore, by whom they are neglected, do both despise their duty, and forsake their own mercy.

(3.) That we are not *able of ourselves* thus to discern them without divine aid and assistance. For the psalmist who was wiser than the wisest of us, and who had so earnest a desire after these things, yet would not trust unto his own reason, wisdom, ability, and diligence, for the understanding of them, but betakes himself unto God by prayer, acknowledging therein that it is *the especial work of God by his Spirit, to enable us to understand his mind and will as revealed in the Scripture.*

4. There is expressed in the words the *act of God* towards us, whereby he enableth us to behold, discern, and understand the wonderful effects of divine wisdom, which are treasured up in the Scripture, which the psalmist prayeth for. This is called his 'opening of our eyes,' גל־עיני: 'reveal mine eyes,' uncover, unveil my eyes. There is a light in the word; all truth is light; and sacred truth is sacred light.

Yea, the word of God is expressly called 'light;' Psal. xxxvi. 9. xliii. 3. cxix. 105. But there is by nature a *covering*, a *veil*, on the eyes of the understandings of all men, that they are not able of themselves to behold this *light*, nor to discern any thing by it in a due manner. With respect hereunto the psalmist prays that God would 'reveal his eyes.' *Revelare* is *velamentum levare;* to reveal is to take off the veil or covering. And this veil is that of our natural darkness, blindness, and ignorance; whereof we have treated elsewhere.

I see not what is wanting unto the explanation or confirmation of the position before laid down. The communication of spiritual light from God, is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost. He is the immediate author of all spiritual illumination. But hereby alone, or by virtue hereof, can we know or understand the mind of God in the Scripture, in such a manner as God requireth us to do; and whosoever hath received the grace of this divine *illumination*, may do so, so far as he is concerned in point of faith or obedience.

The *law* is the *Scripture*, the written word of God. Therein are 'wonderful things,' or mysteries of divine wisdom contained and revealed. To *behold these things*, is to discern and understand them aright, with respect unto our own faith and obedience. This we cannot do without a *supernatural act* of the Spirit of God upon our minds, enabling them to discern them, and understand them; these things are in the text, *ἀναντιῤῥήτως*. And we hence farther argue, that, which is our duty to pray for *spiritual supernatural aid*, to enable us to do, that of *ourselves* we are not able to do, without that aid and assistance; at least we may do it by virtue of that aid and assistance; which includes the substance by just consequences of what is pleaded for. But such *aid*, it is our duty to pray for, that we may understand aright the revelations of the mind and will of God in the Scriptures, the only thing to be proved.

There is but one thing which I can foresee, that may with any pretence of reason be objected unto this testimony of the psalmist in particular. And this is that he speaks of the times and writings of the *Old Testament*. Now it is confessed that there was in them a *darkness* and obscurity, and such as needed *new revelations* for the understanding of them. But since all things are 'brought to light by the gospel,'

there is no need of any special aid or assistance of the Holy Spirit by *supernatural illumination* for the understanding of them. In answer hereunto I shall consider the discourse of the apostle, wherein he stateth this whole matter; 2 Cor. iii. 13—18. 'And not as Moses who put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament, which is done away in Christ. Nevertheless, when it shall turn unto the Lord (or they be turned unto the Lord) the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord.'

When Moses had received the *revelation* of the law from God, 'his face shone;' Exod. xxxiv. 29. For there were wonderful things contained in that revelation with respect unto Jesus Christ; he was in them all, and the end of them all. The whole ministry of Moses was but a testimony given unto the things that were *afterward to be spoken* concerning him, as the apostle declares; Heb. iii. 5.

On the receipt of this revelation 'his face shone;' because there was a light, a lustre, a glory, in the things revealed unto him; and by them reflected on his ministry, which was so represented. Nevertheless, this *light* did not shine immediately into the hearts and minds of the people. They did not see or discern the glorious and 'wonderful things' that were in the law. For there was a *double veil* or covering that hindered them. One that was put on *Moses' face;* another that was on their own *hearts.* Some dark apprehensions and glances of light they had; but 'they could not look steadfastly unto the end of that which was to be abolished;' they could not comprehend the truth concerning Christ, which was the substance and end of the law.

The *first veil,* that which was on the face of Moses, was the obscurity of the instructions given them as wrapped up in *types, shadows,* and *dark parables.* This they could not see through as clearly to discern the 'wonderful things' contained in and under them. This *veil* is quite taken off, in the revelation, or *doctrine of the gospel,* wherein life and immortality are brought to light, and the wonderful things of the

mystery of God in Christ are fully declared, and plainly expressed. Herein, therefore, it is acknowledged, that there is a great difference between those under the *Old* Testament, and those under the *New*.

But, saith the apostle, there is *another veil*; a *veil upon the heart*. And hereof he declareth two things: 1. That this veil is *done away only in Christ;* and, 2. That, therefore, it is not taken away from any, but those who are *converted unto God*. This is the *covering* of ignorance, darkness, blindness, that is on men by nature. The *former veil* is taken away by the *doctrine of the gospel*. This latter is to be removed only by an *effectual work of the Spirit of Christ*, in the conversion of the souls of men unto God.

And two things do ensue on the removal of this *double veil*. 1. That as unto the doctrine itself concerning the mystery of God in Christ; it is no more represented unto us in *types, shadows*, and *dark parables;* but in the clear *glass of the gospel*, whereon the glory of Christ is reflected. Hereby the *veil* is taken off from the *face of Moses*. 2. That we have *πρόσωπον ἀνακεκαλλυμένον*, an 'open uncovered face;' or, as the Syriac reads it, a 'revealed eye,' whereby we are enabled to discern the wonderful mysteries of God so revealed. This ensues on the taking away of the *second veil* of darkness and blindness, which is on the hearts of all by nature.

The removal and destruction of this *double veil* by the Spirit and grace of the gospel, is that which is prophesied of, Isa. xxv. 7. 'And he shall destroy in this mountain the face, הלוט הלוט the covering, covered, or the double veil, that is on the face of all people; and והמסכה הנסוכה, the veil veiled over all nations.'

This being the design of the discourse of the apostle, it is evident that although there be a difference between them under the *Old Testament* and us, as to the *veil* that was on the *face of Moses*, which is destroyed and removed by the *doctrine of the gospel;* yet there is none, as to the *veil* which is on the *hearts* of all by nature, which must be removed by the *Holy Spirit*, or we cannot with *open face* behold the glory of the Lord; the thing which the psalmist prayeth for in the place insisted on. That is, that God by his Spirit would more and more renew his mind, and take away his natural darkness and ignorance, that he might be able to behold,

perceive, and understand, the mind of God as revealed in the Scripture. And if any shall suppose or say, that for their parts they need no such especial *aid* and *assistance* to enable them to understand the mind of God in the Scripture, which is sufficiently exposed to the common reason of all mankind; I shall only say at present, I am afraid they do not understand those places of Scripture, where this *aid* and *assistance* is so expressly affirmed to be necessary thereunto.

But the meaning of the psalmist will the better appear, if we consider the communication of the grace, which he prayed for, unto others. This is expressed, Luke xxiv. 45. 'Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures.' A needless work if some men may be believed. But our Lord Jesus Christ thought not so. The truths concerning him were revealed in the Scripture, that is, of the law and the prophets, and the psalms; ver. 44. These they read, these they were instructed in, these were preached unto them every day. And probably they were as well skilled in the *literal sense* of Scripture propositions, as those who pretend highest amongst us, so to be. Howbeit they could not understand those wonderful things in a way of duty, and as they ought to do, until the Lord Christ *opened their understandings*. There was needful unto them an immediate gracious act of his divine power on their minds to enable them thereunto. And I cannot yet much value those men's understanding of the Scripture, whose *understandings are not opened* by the Spirit of Christ.

If we need the *openings of our understandings* by an act of the power and grace of Christ, that we may *understand the Scriptures*, then without it we cannot so do, namely, so as to believe and yield obedience according unto our duty; the consequence is evident; for if we could, there is no need of this act of Christ towards these disciples, who were not destitute of any *rational abilities*, required in us thereunto. And the act of Christ in *opening their understandings*, is openly distinguished from the proposition of the doctrine of the Scripture unto them. This was made two ways: first, In the *Scripture* itself; secondly, In the oral discourse of our Saviour upon it. Distinct from both these is that act of his whereby he *opened their understandings*, that they might understand the Scripture. Wherefore, nothing but a *real inter-*

nal act of grace, in the illumination of their minds can be intended thereby, the nature whereof shall be farther explained afterward.

But there is an eminent place that must be pleaded distinctly to this purpose. Eph. i. 17—19. 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understandings being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.'

This is the whole of what we would assert, and nothing else.

And if men would acquiesce by faith in what is here declared, we need to plead this cause no farther. For the *words and expressions* of the truth here used, are more *emphatical* unto a spiritual understanding, than any we can find out. And I shall only shew in the opening of them, how our position and sense is contained in them. And, 1. what the apostle doth here for others, it is unquestionably our duty to do for ourselves. We are then to pray, that God *would enable us by his Spirit to know and understand his mind and will, as revealed in the Scripture.* This, therefore, without especial aid and assistance from him by his Spirit, we cannot do. And the *aid* he gives us consists in the *effectual illumination* of our minds, or the enlightening of the eyes of our understandings. These things are plain, and not liable, as I suppose, to any exception. And these are all we plead for. Let them be granted without any other distinctions or limitations, but what the Scripture will justify, and there is an end of this difference. But some particular passages in the words may be considered for the better understanding, and farther confirmation of the truth contained therein.

1. It is a *revelation* that the apostle prays for; or a *Spirit of revelation* to be given unto them. This greatly offends some at first hearing, but wholly without cause. For he understands not new *immediate external revelation from God.* Believers are not directed to look after such revelations for their guide: ever since the Scripture was written, the generality of the church was obliged to attend thereunto alone,

as their only rule of faith and obedience. And although God reserved unto himself a liberty under the Old Testament, and until the completing of all the books of the New, to add *new revelations* as he pleased; yet he always bound up the faith and obedience of the *present church*, unto what he had already revealed. And he hath now by the Spirit of his Son, put an end unto all expectation of any *new*, of any *other* revelations, wherein the faith or obedience of the church should be concerned. At least we take it for granted in this inquiry; that *infallible inspirations* in the discovery of things not before revealed, are ceased in the church. Nor do the *Papists* extend their *infallibility* thereunto, but only unto things already revealed in the Scripture or tradition. What some among ourselves do ascribe of this nature unto their *light*, I do not well know, nor shall now inquire.

But there is an *internal subjective revelation*, whereby no *new things* are revealed unto our minds, or are not outwardly revealed *anew*, but our minds are enabled to discern the things that are revealed already. All the things here mentioned by the apostle, which he desires they might *understand*, were already revealed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the New that were then written, and the infallible declaration of the gospel in the preaching of the apostles. But there was a new work of revelation required, in, and unto, every person, that would understand and comprehend these things in a due manner. For ἀποκάλυψις, or 'revelation,' is the *discovery* of any thing, whether by the *proposal* of it unto us, or the *enabling* of us to discern it when it is so proposed. In the first sense it is used, Rom. xvi. 25. 2 Cor. xii. 1. 7. Gal. i. 12. ii. 2. In the latter, Luke ii. 32. Eph. i. 11. As when God opened the eyes of the servant of Elisha on the prayer of his master, to see the horses and chariots of fire, that were round about him; 2 Kings i. 6. 17. They were not brought thither by the opening of his eyes; only he was enabled to discern them which before he could not do. Or, as when any one maketh use of a *telescope* to behold things afar off, no object is presented unto him, but what was really in the same place before, only his *visive faculty* is assisted to discern them at that distance, which without that assistance it could not reach unto. And the Holy Spirit is here called the Spirit of revelation, *causally;*

as he is the author or principal efficient cause of it: so in his communication unto the Lord Christ himself, he is called 'the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and might; the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord; that should make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord;' Isa. xi. 2. 3.

2. What the psalmist in the place before insisted on calleth in general נפלאות 'wonderful things,' the apostle expresseth in particular, and distributes them under sundry heads as they were more clearly revealed in the gospel. Such are, 'the hope of God's calling,' 'the riches of his glory,' and the 'exceeding greatness of his power in them that do believe.' These are some of the principal and most important mysteries of the gospel. No other understanding can we have of these things, but only as they are *revealed* therein, or of the revelation of them. And in the manner of his expression he declares these things to be 'wonderful,' as the psalmist speaks. For there is in them πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης 'the riches of glory;' which is beyond our comprehension. So he expressly affirms, that it is ἀνεξιχνίαστος, chap. iii. 8. 'past all investigation' or search; the same word that he useth to set forth the ways of God, when his design is to declare them *wonderful*, or the object of our admiration; Rom. xi. 33. 'O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his ways, and his judgments past finding out.' And there is in them, ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος 'an exceeding or inexpressible greatness of power.'

Such are the things that are proposed unto us in the Scripture. And the principal reason why some men judge it so easy a matter to understand and comprehend by *the innate abilities* of their own minds the revelations that are made in the word of God unto us; is, because they do not apprehend that there is any thing *wonderful*, or truly great and glorious in them. And, therefore, because they cannot raise their minds unto a comprehension of these mysteries as they are in themselves; they corrupt and debase them, to suit them unto their own low carnal apprehensions, which is the principle that works effectually in the whole of *Socinianism*. For grant that there are such 'wonderful things,' such mysteries in the gospel as we plead, and the men of that persuasion will not deny, but that our minds do stand

in need of a heavenly assistance to comprehend them aright. For they deny them for no other reason, but because their reason cannot comprehend them.

3. Concerning these things so revealed in the word; the apostle prays for these Ephesians, that they might *know them;* as also he expresseth the way whereby alone they might be enabled so to do. Εἰς τὸ εἰδέναι ὑμᾶς· that they might have a sight, perception, or understanding of them. This he denies a *natural man* to have, or that he can have; he 'cannot know them;' 1 Cor. ii. 14. It is true, it may be said, he cannot know them unless they are *clearly* and fairly proposed unto him; no, nor then neither, by the light and power of his own natural faculties. He cannot do so by the use of any outward means alone. It is futilous to imagine that the apostle intends only, that a *natural man* cannot know things that are never proposed unto him, which is neither weakness nor discommendation. For neither can the *spiritual man* so know any thing.

Because it is thus with men by nature, therefore doth the apostle so earnestly pray, that these Ephesians might be enabled to understand and know these things, and he doth it with an unusual solemnity, invocating the 'God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory:' which argues both a great intension of spirit in him, and great weight laid upon the matter of his request.

But what reason is there for this earnestness? What is wanting unto these Ephesians? what would he yet have for them? were they not *rational men* that had their eyes in their heads as well as others? nay, were not many of them learned men and skilled in all the curious arts of those days? for here it was, that so many upon their first conversion burnt their books to the value 'of fifty thousand pieces of silver;' Acts xix. 19. Probably they were many of them very knowing in the *new and old philosophy*. Had they not the Scripture also; that is, all the books of the Old Testament, and those of the New which were then written? Did not the apostle and others preach the doctrine of the gospel unto them, and therein the things which he here mentioneth? He declareth, and expressly testifieth, that he did; Acts xx. 20. 27. Speaking unto these very persons, that is, the leaders of them; he saith, 'I have kept back nothing which was pro-

fitable unto you, but declared unto you all the counsel of God;' namely, what is the hope of his calling, and what the greatness of his power: were not these things sufficiently revealed, and clearly proposed unto them? If they were not, it was because the apostle *could not* so reveal and propose them, or because he *would not*. If he *could not*, then he prays, that that might be revealed unto them which was not so to him; or that they might learn what he *could not teach them*, which is foolish and impious to imagine. If he *would* not, then he prays, that they may know, that which he would not teach them, which he could easily have so done; which is equally foolish to suppose. What, therefore, do they yet lack? What is yet farther needful, that they might know and understand these things? For we must know, that we understand no more of the mind of God in the revelations that he makes unto us, than we understand of the *things themselves* that are revealed by him.

I am persuaded, that these Ephesians were generally as *wise*, and some of them as *learned*, as any in our days, let them have what conceit of themselves they please. Yet grant some of ours but thus much, that they have their wits about them, and the use of their reason; and let them have the things of the gospel, or the doctrines of it rationally proposed unto them, as they are in the Scripture, and they defy the world to think that they yet want any thing to enable them to *know*, and rightly to understand them. To fancy any thing else to be necessary hereunto is *fanatical* madness. For what would men have? what should ail them? Are not the doctrines of the gospel highly *rational?* are not the things of it eminently suited unto the *reason* of mankind? are not the books of the Scripture written in a style and language *intelligible?* Is there any thing more required unto the understanding of the mind of any author, but to conceive the *grammatical* sense of the words that he useth, and the nature of his propositions and arguings? And although St. Paul, as some say, *be one of the obscurest writers they ever met with;* yet surely by these means some good shift may be made with his writings also. It is, therefore, *canting and nonsense*, a reproach to reason and Christian religion itself, to think that this is not enough to enable men to understand the mind of God in the Scriptures.

Well, be it so, at present, unto the highly *rational abilities* of some persons; it cannot be denied, but that the apostle judged it necessary, that these Ephesians should have the *special aid of the Spirit of God* unto this end, which he prayeth for. And we may be excused if we dare not think ourselves better than they; nor to have a sufficiency of learning, wisdom, and reason above others, or less to need prayers of this nature than they did. And we find that the apostle renewеth his prayer for them again unto the same purpose, with great fervency; chap. iii. 14—19. All the difference ariseth from hence, that the apostle judgeth, that over and above the utmost exercise of our natural faculties and abilities in the use of outward means that we may know the mind of God in the Scripture, wherein these Ephesians were not wanting; it is necessary that the 'eyes of our understanding' should be spiritually opened and enlightened; but other men it seems think not so.

But yet if men should be allowed to suppose, that our minds were no way vitiated, depraved, or darkened by the fall, which supposition is the sole foundation of these assertions; yet it is most irrational to imagine, that we can comprehend and understand *the mysteries of the gospel* without especial *spiritual illumination*. For the original light and abilities of our minds was not suited or prepared for the receiving and understanding of them. For neither their being nor revelation was consistent with the state of integrity. Wherefore, although our minds should be allowed to be as wise and perspicacious with respect unto that natural knowledge of God and all that belongs unto it, which was proposed unto us, or necessary for us in the state of nature; yet would it not follow, that we are able to discern the *mysteries of grace* when proposed unto us. The truth is, if our minds be not corrupted or depraved, there is no need of the gospel nor its grace; and if they are, we cannot understand the mind of God therein, without especial illumination.

But it may be said, that these things are consistent. For notwithstanding men's *rational abilities*, and the use of means, yet it is meet that they should both pray for themselves, and that others, whose duty it is, should pray for them also. It is so, that they may be *diligent* in their inquiries, and obtain

the *blessing of God upon their diligence*. But this doth not prove at all, that they are *not able of themselves* to apprehend and know the mind and things of God in the Scripture, or that any thing is wanting in them, or to them, which is absolutely necessary thereunto.

I answer, That on these suppositions; there is indeed nothing wanting, but that which the apostle moreover prayeth for, which is none of them. And if that be not also requisite unto this end, his prayer is vain and useless. That men be diligent in the discharge of their duty herein, and that they may have the especial blessing of God thereon, are here supposed, and we shall speak unto them afterward. These are not the things that the apostle here prayeth for; but that God would give them the 'Spirit of wisdom and revelation to enlighten the eyes of their understandings,' that they may know them, as shall be immediately declared. And indeed, I understand not how this prayer can be suited unto the principles of any who deny the necessity of this internal spiritual aid.

For they cannot but think it strange to pray for a 'Spirit of wisdom and revelation' to be given unto their *whole congregations*, which were a dangerous way to make them wiser than their teachers. And for themselves, using diligence, and praying for a blessing in their diligence, they disavow any farther concernment in this matter.

4. The thing in especial prayed for, in order unto the end proposed, is, that the 'eyes of our understandings may be enlightened.' This is the same which the psalmist prayeth for in the place before insisted on, that God 'would open his eyes.' And it is the *internal work of illumination* that is intended. Now, although the main force of the argument depends on these words, yet shall I not insist here upon them; because I must speak somewhat more in particular unto the nature of this work afterward. Besides, what is that darkness which is here supposed to be on our minds or understandings; what is its nature, efficacy, and power; how it is taken away and removed; what is the nature of that spiritual light which is communicated unto us, in and for the removal thereof, I have at large elsewhere declared. All that at present I shall observe from these words, is, in general, that there is an *especial work of the Spirit of God in the enlightening*

the eyes of our understandings, necessary unto our discerning of the mysteries of the gospel in a due manner; which was to be proved.

5. What is declared concerning the author of this work in us, or the principal efficient cause of it, doth farther confirm the same truth. And this is the *Holy Spirit;* 'that he would give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.' That the Holy Spirit is the immediate author of all supernatural effects and operations in us, hath been elsewhere proved at large. And what he is promised or given in the gospel so to effect, is not any thing that is in our own power. Wherefore, the ascription of the *communication of this ability* unto the Holy Ghost, is a sufficient evidence that we want it in ourselves. And all things here affirmed concerning the manner of his communication unto us, and his properties as communicated, do evidence the nature, and evince the truth, of the work ascribed unto him. As for the first, it is by the *grant, donation,* or *free gift,* of God the Father; ver. 17. 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto you.' God is called, the 'King of glory;' Psal. xxiv. 7, 8. and the 'God of glory;' Acts vii. 2. with respect unto his own glorious majesty. But he is the 'Father of glory,' as he is the eternal spring and cause of all glory, unto the church. And these titles are prefixed unto this grant or the request of it, 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,' to intimate that it proceeds from his relation unto us in Christ, with that love and bounty wherein he is the cause of all grace and glory unto us. Wherefore, receiving this Spirit by *free donation,* as we do, Luke xi. 13. all that we receive from him and by him, we have it by the way of *free gift* or donation also. Therefore is this ability of *understanding the Scripture,* and the mysteries of the truth contained therein, a mere *free gift of God,* which he bestows on whom he will. So our Saviour told his disciples, 'unto you it is given to know the mysteries of God, but to them (to others) it is not given;' Matt. xiii. 11. who yet heard his words, and understood the literal sense of the propositions used by him as well as the disciples did. Whoever, therefore, hath this ability to know the mysteries of the gospel, he hath it by *free gift,* or donation from God. He hath received it, and may not boast as if it were from himself, and

that he had not received it, as the apostle speaks; 1 Cor. iv. 7. Again, the properties ascribed unto him, as thus communicated for this end, are *wisdom* and *revelation*.

(1.) He is the 'Spirit of wisdom.' So in the communication of him in all fulness unto the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church, he is called the 'Spirit of wisdom and understanding;' Isa. xi. 2. and that because he was to make him of 'quick understanding in the fear of the Lord;' ver. 3. He is a 'Spirit of wisdom' essentially in himself; and *causally* or efficiently unto others. And these things do mutually demonstrate each other. That he is the cause of all wisdom in others, is a demonstration that he is *essentially* wise in himself. 'For he that planted the ear shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?' And because he is essentially wise, he must be the author of all wisdom unto others. For all good must come from that which is infinitely, eternally, unchangeably so; James i. 17. He is, therefore, called the 'Spirit of wisdom,' on both these accounts; as he is *essentially* so in himself, and as he is the *efficient cause* of all wisdom unto others. And it is in the latter way immediately that he is here so termed. And this property is peculiarly ascribed unto him, as thus given unto us, to 'open our eyes,' with respect unto the work which he is to do. For wisdom is required hereunto. That wisdom which may deliver us from being really *fools* ourselves, and from judging the things of God to be folly.

There is a wisdom required hereunto: 'Who is wise, and he shall understand these things; prudent, and he shall know them; for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein;' Hos. xiv. 9. Want of this wisdom is the cause that wicked men take offence at, and dislike the ways of God, because they do not spiritually understand them, and so cast themselves into destruction. And it is of the same things that the prophet affirms, that none 'of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand;' Dan. xii. 10. And it is called, the 'wisdom of the just;' Luke i. 17.

This wisdom is not in us by nature. Men are naturally wise in their own conceit; which if continued in, is a hopeless frame of mind; Prov. xxvi. 12. And in nothing doth it more evidence itself, than in apprehensions of their own abi-

lity to comprehend spiritual things, and in their contempt of what they do not so, as folly; 1 Cor. i. 18. 23. And with respect hereunto, doth the apostle give that advice unto us, as our duty; 'Let no man deceive himself, if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise;' 1 Cor. iii. 18. This is a matter wherein men are very apt to deceive themselves; even to conceit themselves wise, and to trust thereunto in the things of God, whereof alone he there treats. Whereas, therefore, the especial promise of God is to teach the *meek* and the *humble*, there is nothing that sets men at a greater distance from divine instruction, than a proud conceit of their own wisdom, wit, parts, and abilities. Wherefore, this wisdom which is the daughter of natural darkness, and the mother of proud spiritual ignorance, the Spirit of wisdom freeth the minds of believers from, in the way that shall be afterward declared; and therein is he unto us, a 'Spirit of wisdom.' Moreover, he gives us that 'wisdom which is from above,' which we are directed to ask of God; James i. 5. Without this wisdom which he works in us, no man can understand the wisdom of God in the mystery of the gospel; whoso is thus made wise, shall understand these things, and none else. There is, therefore, a *gift of spiritual wisdom* and understanding necessary hereunto, that we may discern the 'wonderful things' that are in the word of God. To whom this is not given, they know not the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Let men please or pride themselves whilst they will in their own wisdom and learning, and explode the consideration of these things in our inquiries after the mind of God, the meanest believer who hath received this wisdom from above, according unto the measure of the gift of Christ, knoweth more of the mind of God in a due manner than they do.

When our Lord Jesus Christ affirmed that he came into the world, 'that they which see not, might see,' or to communicate spiritual saving light into the minds of men, the Pharisees who had great apprehensions of their own *wisdom* and understanding in the law, replied with scorn, 'And are we blind also?' John ix. 33. 40. It proved no otherwise, and that to their eternal ruin; yet do I not judge all them to be *practically* blind, who do not *doctrinally* own the receiving of

this wisdom and light from above. For, although we make not ourselves to differ from others, nor have any thing in a way of spiritual ability, but what we have received, yet are some apt to *glory* as if they had not received, as the apostle intimates; 1 Cor. iv. 7. Wherefore, the Holy Spirit, as given unto us, is said to be a 'Spirit of wisdom,' because he *maketh us wise* or worketh wisdom in us. This wisdom we have not of ourselves; for to suppose it, renders the word of God of none effect. And this spiritual wisdom, thus to be bestowed upon us, thus to be wrought in us, is necessary that we may know the mysteries of the gospel, or understand the mind of God therein; which is all that we plead for.

I have insisted the longer upon this testimony, because the whole of what we assert in general, in the nature, causes, and effects of it, is fully declared therein. And this was the way whereby they of old came to understand divine revelations, or the mind of God as revealed in the Scripture. If others who seem to scorn all mention of the *teaching of the Holy Ghost*, have found out a course more expedite unto the same end, it is what I understand not, nor do desire to participate in.

CHAP. III.

Other testimonies pleaded in the confirmation of the same truth; John xvi. 13. *opened. How far all true believers are infallibly led into all truth, declared. And the manner how they are so.* 1 John ii. 20. 27. *explained. What assurance of the truth they have who are taught of God.* Eph. i. 5, 6. John xxx. 22. vi. 45. *Practical truths inferred from the assertion proved.*

THERE are yet other testimonies which may be pleaded unto the same purpose. For unto this end is the Holy Ghost promised unto all believers; John xvi. 13. 'When the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth.'

The Holy Spirit is called the 'Spirit of truth,' principally on the same account as God absolutely is called 'the God of truth;' he is so *essentially*. He is the first, absolute, divine, eternal verity; so he is originally called the Holy Spirit on the account of his *essential* holiness. But it is not on that account solely that he is here called the 'Spirit of truth.' He is so as he is the *revealer* of all divine supernatural truth unto the church. As he is also called the Holy Spirit, as he is author of all holiness in others; therefore is he here promised unto the church as it is his work to *lead us into all truth.*

And two things are considerable in this promise: 1. What is intended by *all truth.* 2. How the Holy Spirit *guides* or *leads* us into it.

1. With respect unto the *object,* it is not *all truth absolutely* that is intended. There is truth in things natural, civil, and stories of things that are past; nothing of this nature is comprised in this promise. We see believers of all sorts as ignorant of, as unacquainted with, many of these things, as any other sort of men whatever. Yet doth not one word of the promise of Christ fall unto the ground. Wherefore, *all that truth,* or all truth of that nature whereof our Saviour there speaketh, is alone intended. The mysteries of the gospel, of the kingdom of heaven, the counsel of God about the salvation of the church by Christ, and concerning their faith and obedience, are the truth which he is promised to guide us into. This the apostle calleth 'all the

counsel of God;' Acts xx. 27. namely, which respects all the ends of our faith and obedience ; ver. 21.

2. It admits of a *limitation* with respect unto the diversity of subjects, or the persons unto whom this truth is to be communicated. They are not all of them, as to the *degrees* of light and knowledge, *equally* to be led into all truth. Every one unto whom he is thus promised, shall be so far led into the knowledge of it, as is necessary unto his own estate and condition, his duty and his work. For unto 'every one of us is given grace according unto the measure of the gift of Christ;' Eph. iv. 7. It is Christ alone, who in the free gift of all grace, *assigns the measures* wherein every one shall be made partaker of it. In his sovereign will he hath allotted the measures of grace, light, and knowledge, unto all the members of the church. And there is no less difference in *these measures,* than in the knowledge of the most glorious apostle, and that of the meanest believer in the world. The duty, work, and obedience of every one, is the *rule of the measure* of his receiving these gifts of Christ. None shall want any thing that is necessary unto him ; none shall receive any thing that he is not to use and improve in a way of duty.

2. Our second inquiry is, how the Spirit doth thus *lead us* into all truth. The external revelation of truth is herein supposed. This he is promised to instruct us in the knowledge of, in a spiritual manner, whereby I understand no more, but so as it is required of us in a way of duty. To clear the truth hereof, some things must be observed. As,

1. The promises concerning the *mission of the Holy Spirit* in these chapters of the Gospel, xiv. xv. xvi. are not to be confined unto the *apostles,* nor unto the *first age or ages of the church.* To do so is expressly contradictory unto the discourse and whole design of our Lord Jesus Christ unto that purpose. For he promiseth him in opposition unto his own temporary abode in the world ; namely, that this of the Spirit should *be for ever ;* chap. xiv. 16. that is, ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, Matt. xxviii. 20. unto the *consummation* of the whole state of the church here below. And to suppose the contrary, is to overthrow the foundation of all truth and comfort in the church. For their preservation in the one, and the administration of the other, unto them, depend on the

accomplishment of this promise alone. And so also do all the benefits of the intercession of Christ, which are no otherwise communicated unto us, but by the *Holy Spirit*, as given in pursuit of this promise. For what herein he prayed for his apostles, he prayed 'for all them that should believe in him through this word unto the end of the world;' John xvii.

2. It is granted, that sundry things in the promises of the Holy Ghost were peculiar unto the apostles, and had their accomplishment on the day of Pentecost, when he descended on them in that glorious visible manner; Acts ii. 1—4. For as they were commanded by our Saviour *to wait for this his coming* before they engaged in the discharge of that office whereunto he had called them; Acts i. 4. so now they were fully empowered and enabled unto all that belonged thereunto. But their peculiar interest in these promises, respected only things that were peculiar unto their office; such as that mentioned in this place is not.

3. It is not an *external guidance* into the truth by the objective revelation of it, that is intended; for such revelations are not granted unto all believers unto whom this promise is made, nor are they to look for them. And the revelation of truth in the ministerial proposal of it, is common unto all the world unto whom the word is preached, and so is not the subject of an especial promise.

4. Wherefore, it is the *internal teaching* of the Holy Ghost giving an understanding of the mind of God, of all sacred truths as revealed, that is intended. For, (1.) it is the same with that other promise, we 'shall be all taught of God.' For we are thus taught of God by the 'Spirit's leading us into all truth,' and no otherwise. (2.) This the word enforceth; the Spirit of truth, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς, shall lead and guide you in the right way to the knowledge of the truth. So when Philip asked the eunuch whether he understood the things which he read out of the prophet Isaiah, he replieth, 'How can I?' ἐὰν μή τις ὁδηγήσῃ με; Acts viii. 31. 'unless one lead me' to the sense of it; that is, by his interpretation give me an understanding of it. Thus the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth by giving us that understanding of it, which of ourselves we are not able to attain. And other interpretations the words will not admit. It is, there-

fore, his work to give us a useful saving understanding of all sacred truth, or the mind of God as revealed in the Scripture. All spiritual *divine supernatural truth* is revealed in the Scripture. Herein all are agreed. The knowledge, the *right understanding* of this truth as so revealed, is the duty of all, according unto the means which they enjoy, and the duties that are required of them. Neither can this be denied. Unto this end that they may do so, the Holy Spirit is here *promised unto them that do believe.* His divine aid and assistance is, therefore, necessary hereunto. And this we are to *pray for,* as it is promised. Wherefore, of ourselves, without his especial assistance and guidance, we cannot attain a due knowledge of, and understanding in, the truth revealed in the Scripture. As unto the especial nature of this assistance it shall be spoken unto afterward.

This is again affirmed concerning all believers; 1 John ii. 20. 27. 'You have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things; the anointing which you have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in it.'

1. That by the *unction* and anointing in this place the Spirit of God and his work, with respect unto the end mentioned, are intended, is not questioned by any that are conversant about these things with sobriety. And it is plain in the text. For, (1.) That the Holy Spirit in his especial operations, is called an *unction,* or is said to *anoint* us, is evident in many places of the Scripture; see Heb. i. 9. 2 Cor. i. 22, 23. Neither is a spiritual unction ascribed unto any thing else in the whole Scripture. (2.) That expression, 'which you have from the Holy One,' (Acts iii. 14. Rev. iii. 7.) that is, *Jesus Christ,* doth expressly answer unto the promise of Christ, to send his Holy Spirit unto us, and that for the end here mentioned, namely, to teach us, and lead us into all truth; whence he is called 'the Spirit of the Lord,' or of Christ; 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. Eph. iii. 16. Phil. i. 19, &c. (3.) That also, of his 'abiding in us,' is nothing but an expression of the same promise of Christ, that he shall 'abide with us for ever;' John xiv. 16. (4.) The work here assigned unto this unction, is expressly assigned unto the Holy Spi-

rit; John xvi. 13. The 'Spirit of truth shall guide you into all truth.' (5.) What is said of it, namely, not only that *it is true, and not false,* but that it is *truth and no lie,* doth plainly intimate his *essential* verity. And I cannot but wonder that any persons should against this open and plain evidence, ascribe the things here mentioned unto any thing else, and that exclusively unto the Holy Ghost. For so do some contend (Episcop. in loc. after Socin. on the same place), that by this unction the *doctrine of the gospel only* is intended. It is true that the doctrine of the gospel in the preaching of it, is the means or instrumental cause of this teaching by the Holy Ghost. And on that account what is spoken of the teaching of the Spirit of God, may be spoken in its place of the doctrine of the gospel, because he teacheth us thereby. But here it is spoken of *objectively,* as what we are to be taught, and not *efficiently,* as what it is that teacheth us. And to say as they do, it is the instruction which we have by the gospel that is intended, is to assert the *effect* only, and to exclude the cause. For that signifies no more, but the effect of the unction here ascribed unto believers, as that which they had received from the Holy One. Dydimus, an ancient learned writer, interpreteth this *unction* to be the *illuminating* grace of the Spirit, and the *Holy One* to be the *Spirit himself;* lib. 2. de Spir. Sanct. But the other interpretation is more proper and consonant unto the use of the Scripture. The expression is taken from the institution of God under the Old Testament, whereby kings and priests are *anointed* with oil, to signify the gifts of the Spirit communicated unto them for the discharge of their office. And thence believers who are real partakers of the internal *unction* in the graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost, are said to be 'made kings and priests unto God.' It is, therefore, the work of the Holy Spirit that is here described. He alone with his gifts, graces, and privileges, that ensue thereon, are so expressed, here or any where else in the whole Scripture.

2. Two things are to be observed in what is here ascribed unto this unction. (1.) What is the *effect* of his work in believers. (2.) What is the *nature* of it, or how he produceth that effect.

(1.) For the first, there is a double expression of it; [1.] 'That they know all things.' [2.] That they 'need not that

any should teach them;' both which expressions admit of, yea require, their limitations.

[1.] The 'all things' intended, come under a double restriction: the first taken from the *nature* of the things themselves; the other from the *scope* and circumstances of the place: or, the one from the general end, the other from the special design, proposed.

1st. The *general end* proposed, is our 'abiding in Christ.' So 'ye shall abide in him;' which the apostle expresseth, ver. 24. by 'continuing in the Son, and in the Father.' Wherefore, the *all things* here mentioned, are all things necessary unto our ingrafting into and continuance in Christ. Such are all the fundamental, yea, important truths of the gospel. Whatever is needful unto our communion with Christ, and our obedience to him, this all true believers are taught; however they may mistake in things of *lesser moment*, and be ignorant in the doctrine of some truths, or have but mean degrees of knowledge in any thing, yet shall they all know the mind and will of God as revealed in the Scripture, in all those things and truths which are necessary, that they may believe unto righteousness, and make confession unto salvation.

2ndly. The *especial end*, under consideration, is preservation and deliverance from the antichrists and seducers of those days, with the errors, lies, and false doctrines which they divulged, concerning Christ and the gospel. The only way and means whereby we may be so preserved from the poisons and infections of such pernicious opinions and ways, is the assured knowledge of the truths of the gospel, as they are revealed in the Scripture. All those truths which were any way needful to secure their faith, and preserve them from *mortal* seductions, they were taught and did know. And where any man knows the truths which are required unto his implantation into Christ, and his continuance with him in faith and obedience; as also, all those which may preserve him from the danger of seduction into pernicious errors; however he may fail and be mistaken in some things of less importance; yet is he secured as unto his present acceptable obedience, and future blessedness. And to speak of it by the way, this giveth us the *rule of our especial communion and love*. Where any are *taught* these things, where they

have the knowledge, and make confession of that truth, or those articles of faith whereby they may 'abide in Christ,' and are preserved *from pernicious seductions*, although they may differ from us and the truth in some things of less moment; we are obliged not only to forbearance of them, but *communion* with them: for who shall refuse them, whom Christ hath received? or doth Christ refuse any to whom he gives his Spirit, who have the *unction* from the Holy One? This, and no other, is the rule of our *evangelical love* and communion among ourselves. Whatever we require more of any as a necessary condition of our Christian society in point of doctrine, is an unwarrantable *imposition* on their consciences or practice, or both.

[2.] It is said, that they so know these things, as that they 'need not that any should teach them;' which also requireth a limitation or exposition. For,

1st. It is only the things as before declared that respect is had unto. Now besides these, there are many other things which believers stand in need to be taught continually; and whose knowledge belongs unto their *edification*. Many things are very *useful* unto us, that are not absolutely *necessary*. In natural things, and such as belong unto this present life: men would be very unwilling to be without, or part with sundry things, without which yet life might be preserved, because they value them, as of use unto themselves, so enabling them to be useful unto others. And they who understand the nature, use, and benefit of *evangelical truths*, will not be contented that their knowledge in them should be confined only unto those which are of *absolute necessity* unto the being of spiritual life. Yea, they cannot be well supposed to know those truths themselves, who pretend such a satisfaction in them as to look no farther. For all who are sincere in faith and knowledge, do aim at that 'perfect man in Christ,' which all the ordinances of God are designed to bring us unto; Eph. iv. 13. Wherefore, notwithstanding the knowledge of these things, there is still use and need of farther ministerial teaching in the church.

2ndly. It is spoken of the things themselves *absolutely*, and not with respect unto the *degrees* of the knowledge of them. They did so know them, as there was no need that any man should teach them unto them, as unto their *initial*

knowledge and substance of the things themselves; and so it may be said of all believers. But yet there are *degrees of knowledge* with respect unto those very things, which they may and ought to be carried on unto, as the apostle speaketh, Heb. vi. 1. And, therefore, doth the holy apostle himself, who writes these things, *farther instruct* them in them. And herein consists the principal part of the ministry of the church, even to carry on believers unto perfection, in those things wherein, for the substance of them, they have been already instructed.

3rdly. That which is principally intended, is that they need not that any should teach them, so as that they should depend on the light and *authority* of their instruction. Others may be helpers of their joy, but none can be lords of their faith. You need no such teaching because of the *unction* which you have received.

(2.) For the general nature of the work here ascribed unto this *unction*, that is, the Holy Spirit, it is *teaching*; 'the unction teacheth you.' There are but two ways whereby the Spirit teacheth us; nor can any other be conceived. The one is by *objective*, the other by *subjective*, revelations. For he teacheth us as a Spirit of 'wisdom and revelation.' The first way of his teaching is, by immediate inspiration, communicating new sacred truths from God immediately unto the minds of men. So he taught the *prophets* and *apostles* and all the penmen of the Scripture. By him the word of the Lord came unto them, and they spake as they were *acted* by him. 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. 2 Pet. i. 21. This is not the way of teaching here intended. For, the end of this teaching of the Holy Ghost is only to make men teachers of others, which is not here intended. Nor doth the apostle discourse unto any such purpose; as though God would grant *new revelations* unto men, to preserve them from errors and seductions, which he hath made sufficient provision for in the word; Isa. viii. 20. 2 Pet. i. 19. By this word were they to try all doctrines and pretended revelations, yea, they which were so really before they received them; 1 John iv. 1. Besides, what is here affirmed, is ascribed unto all sorts of believers, under the distribution which they are cast into by the apostle, namely, of 'old men,' 'young men,' and 'babes,' which had not all of them received the Spirit of immediate revelation.

His other way of teaching is, that which we have insisted on; namely, his enabling us to discern, know, and understand the mind and will of God, as revealed in the Scripture, or as declared in any divine revelation; this alone is, or can be, here intended. Wherefore, this is the design of the apostle, in these words; *All divine truths necessary to be known, and to be believed, that we may live unto God in faith and obedience, or come unto, and abide in Christ; as also, be preserved from seducers, are contained in the Scripture, or proposed unto us in divine revelations. These of ourselves we cannot understand, unto the ends mentioned; for if we could, there would be no need that we should be taught them by the Holy Spirit. But this is so, he teacheth us all these things, enabling us to discern, comprehend, and acknowledge them.* And this is the whole of what we plead for.

For a close of our considerations on these words of the apostle, I shall only observe what assurance a man that is thus taught the truth, may have, that it is the truth which he is taught, and that he is not deceived in his apprehensions of it. For hereon depends the use of this instruction; especially in times of trial, indeed at all times and on all occasions. It is not enough that we know the truth, but we must be assured, that so we do. See Eph. iv. 14. Col. ii. 2. And there was never a greater *artifice* in the world, than that whereby the *Roman church* hath imposed an impregnable obstinate credulity on all that adhere thereunto. For it doth first fix this in their minds, that itself *cannot err*, and therefore whatever is by her authority proposed unto them, is infallibly true. Hence it comes to pass that they will abide obstinate against all convictions, and the highest evidence of truth in all particular instances, whilst this principle is firmly fixed in their minds, that the church which proposeth these things unto them *cannot err*, nor be mistaken. Yea, whilst this persuasion abides with them, they may be, and indeed accordingly are, obliged to believe contradictions; things most irrational and absurd, inconsistent with Christian piety, and the peace of human society. However, they say well in this, that it is necessary that a man should have *good assurance* of the truth which he doth profess, or of his own understanding of it, and conception about it. This the apostle calleth the 'riches of the full assur-

ance of understanding;' Col. ii. 2. whereof we shall speak afterward.

Wherefore, whereas the assurance of mind in other teachings depend much on the *authority* of them by whom they are taught; on a supposition that believers are taught the mind of God in the Scripture by the Holy Spirit, or are by him enabled to discern and know it; the inquiry is, how, or by what means they have an *assurance* that they have a *right understanding* of the things which they are so taught, so as to abide in them, and the profession of them, against all opposition whatever; and so as to venture the eternal condition of their souls on *that assurance* they have of the truth; which every one must do, whether he will or no. And this in the text is referred unto the author of this teaching. 'For the anointing is truth, and is no lie;' it is true and infallibly so. There is no fear of, no possibility for, any man to be deceived in what he is taught by this *unction*. And an assurance hereof ariseth in our minds, partly from the *manner* of his teachings, and partly from the *evidence* of the things themselves that we are taught. The manner and way of his teaching us in and by the Scripture, evidenceth unto us, that what we are taught is *true*, and *no lie*. He giveth a *secret witness* unto what he teacheth in his teachings. 'For it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth;' 1 John v. 6. And with respect unto the evidence which is so given us of the truth, it is said, that the *unction* whereby we are taught *is true and no lie;* that is, it is impossible any one should be deceived who is so taught. This will more fully appear when we have declared the whole of his work herein; something only may now be spoken on occasion of this testimony.

There is a peculiar power accompanying the teaching of God by his Spirit. 'Behold, God exalteth by his power, who teacheth like him?' Job xxxvi. 22. So our Saviour expoundeth that promise, 'They shall be all taught of God; every man,' saith he, 'therefore, that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me;' John vi. 45. There is such an efficacy accompanying of God's teaching, that whosoever is so taught, doth certainly believe the things that he is taught, as having the evidence of the truth of them in himself.

When the Holy Ghost gave *new revelations* of old unto the prophets and penmen of the Scripture by *immediate inspiration*, he did therein and therewith communicate unto them an infallible evidence that they were from God. And when he doth *illuminate our minds* in the knowledge of what is revealed, he doth therein himself bear witness unto, and assure us of, the truth which we do understand. Hereby do we come to that which the apostle calleth the 'full assurance of understanding, in the acknowledgment of the mystery of God.' He not only enableth our minds to apprehend the truth, but he shines into our hearts, the seat of spiritual experience, to give us the 'knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' And the assurance which believers have thereby, is above that which any other evidence or demonstration whatever can give. And the meanest believer hath from this teaching, a greater rest, satisfaction, and assurance, in the knowledge of the mind of God, than any can be attained by the most raised notions, or profound disputations; 'for he that believeth, hath the witness in himself;' 1 John v. 10. And why should others think it strange, that there should be that evidence of truth in the teachings of the Spirit, by the illumination of our minds in the knowledge of the Scripture, as to give us an assurance of the highest nature, *seeing there is none that teacheth like him?*

Want hereof, is that which makes men to fluctuate in their conceptions of spiritual things, and so ready on every occasion to part with what they have received. The church of *Rome* hath, as we observed, rather *craftily*, than *wisely* provided against any inconvenience herein. The doctrines which it teacheth are many of them false; and so the things contained in them can give no evidence unto themselves in the minds of men. For there is nothing but *imagination* in error, there is nothing of substance in it. And their *way of teaching* is not accompanied with any especial advantage; yea, it is the most vain that ever was in the world. They would have men suppose that they may advance at once in the true belief of a *hundred things* whereof they have no evidence, merely resting on the infallibility of the church, by which, they say, they are *proposed*. Wherefore, they teach men that although they receive no evidencing light,

in this way of their instruction, nor have any experience of the power or efficacy of truth in what they are taught, yet they may rest assuredly in the *infallibility of the church.* Hence the assurance they have of any thing they suppose truth, is not an act of the mind in the embracing of the truth, from any evidence that it gives of itself, but a presumption in general that the *church is infallible,* by which these things are proposed unto them. The design is to prevail with men, to suppose that they believe *all things,* when indeed they believe *nothing:* that they understand the mind and will of God, when indeed they understand nothing at all of them. For a man believes nothing but what is accompanied with an evidence whereon it ought to be believed. But this they pretend not unto, at least, not such that should give them that assurance of the truth of it, which is requisite; and, therefore, are all men by them referred for that unto the *infallibility* of the church. Persons weak, ignorant, credulous, or superstitious, either for interest, or by the craft of seducers, may be prevailed on to make their resort unto this relief; those who will not forego the rational conduct of their own souls, and leave themselves unto the guidance of others, knowing that it is they alone, who must give an account of themselves to God; will not easily be induced thereunto.

Others will resolve all into their own *rational conceptions* of things, without any respect unto a superior infallible teacher. And the minds of many influenced by this notion, *that they have themselves alone to trust unto,* are come unto the utmost uncertainty and instability in all things of religion; nor can it otherwise be. For the mind of man is in itself as indifferent and undetermined unto any thing, as true or false (unless it be in its first notions of the common principles of reason), beyond the evidence that is proposed unto it: so also is it *various, unsteady,* and apt to fluctuate from one thing to another. And there are but two ways whereby it may be naturally ascertained, and determined in its conceptions and assent. The first is by the use of the *external senses,* which will not deceive it; however it cannot but receive, believe, and comply with what it comprehends by its *senses;* as what it sees, hears, and feels. The other is by *reason,* whereby it deduceth certain conclusions, from

propositions of necessary truth; that is, by *demonstration*. But by neither of these ways can the mind be brought unto a stability and *assurance* in or about things spiritual or supernatural. For they are neither the objects of *natural* sense, nor capable of a *scientifical* demonstration. Wherefore, a man can have nothing but a probability or conjectural knowledge concerning them, unless he have some certain *infallible teaching* wherein he can acquiesce. And such is that of this *unction*, which is *truth* and *no lie*. In and by his teaching of us, namely, the mind of God as revealed in the Scripture, there is that evidence of truth communicated unto our minds and hearts, as giveth us an immoveable assurance of them, or the *full assurance of understanding*. For God therein 'shines into our hearts, to give us the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.'

Again, there is an evidence in the things themselves, unto *spiritual sense and judgment;* Phil. i. 9. Heb. v. last. This is that which gives the mind the highest assurance of the truth of what it doth believe, that it is capable of in this world. For when it *finds in itself* the power and efficacy of the truth wherein it is instructed, that it worketh, effecteth, and implanteth the things themselves upon it, giving and ascertaining unto it all the benefits and comforts which they promise or express, and is thereby united unto the soul, or hath a real, permanent, efficacious subsistence in it; then, I say, hath the mind the utmost assurance in the truth of it, which it doth or can desire in the things of this nature. But this belongs not unto our present design.

The testimonies pleaded are sufficient for the confirmation of our first general assertion, namely, *That it is the Holy Spirit who teacheth us to understand aright the mind and will of God in the Scripture, without whose aid and assistance we can never do so usefully nor profitably unto our own souls.* Sundry others that speak unto the same purpose will be afterward on various occasions insisted on.

I might add unto these testimonies, the faith and profession of the church in all ages. They all believed and professed, that the Scriptures could not be understood and interpreted without his assistance and inspiration by whom they were indited. But it is not necessary so to do. For those who profess a *trust* unto their own reason and un-

derstanding only, cannot be so ignorant as not to know that they have no countenance given unto their persuasion in *antiquity*, unless it were by the *Pelagians*. But whereas there is no profitable handling of sacred truths on any pretence, but with an eye unto the guidance of Christian practice; and when that is manifest, it gives a great confirmation in our minds unto the truth itself; I shall, before I proceed unto the consideration of the *especial ways* of the *teaching of the Holy Spirit* in this matter, and the *especial duties* required of us in compliance with them, that they may be effectual, divert a little unto some such considerations of that nature, as derive from this general assertion.

It is the great promise of the New Testament, that all believers shall be διδακτοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, 'taught of God;' which our Saviour himself pleads, as the only ground of their believing; John vi. 45. And so the apostle tells the Thessalonians, that they were θεοδίδακτοί, 1 Thess. iv. 9. 'taught of God.' No man is αὐτόδιδακτος, taught of himself, his own teacher and guide in sacred things. Neither can any man have a worse master, if he trust thereunto alone. The diligent use of all outward means appointed of God unto this end, that through the knowledge of the Scripture we may be made wise unto salvation, we always suppose. Amongst them the *ministry of the church* hath the first and chiefest place; Eph. iv. 12—15. For they are with me of no account, who think it not worth the utmost of their diligence to attain the knowledge of those 'wonderful things' that are in the word. Yea, I should greatly admire at their stupidity, who will not give so much *credit unto the Scripture* testifying of itself, and the suffrage of all good men with it, that there are 'wonderful things' contained in it, so far as to inquire with their utmost diligence, whether it be so or no, but that I know the reasons and causes of it. But a *supreme teacher* there must be, on whose wisdom, power, and authority, we ought principally to depend, as unto this end, of being taught of God. And hereunto the use of our own reason, the utmost improvement of the rational abilities of our minds, is required. Those who would take away the *use of our reason* in spiritual things, would deal with us, as we said before, as the Philistines did with Samson; first put out our eyes, and then make us grind in their mill. The Scripture we own as the only rule

of our faith, as the only treasury of all sacred truths. The knowledge we aim at, is the *full assurance of understanding* in the mind and will of God revealed therein. The sole inquiry is, whether this supreme teacher be the Spirit of God instructing us in and by the Scripture, or whether it be the authority of this or that, any or all of the churches in the world, which either are so, or pretend to be so. Which of these will it be our wisdom to choose and adhere unto? That the Holy Spirit hath taken this work upon himself, we have already proved, and shall afterward farther demonstrate. Some churches, especially that of *Rome*, assume this office unto themselves. But it is too well known to the most to be trusted herein. And a great prejudice there lieth in this cause against that church at first. The Holy Spirit leaves unto us, yea, requires of us, the *diligent* use of the Scripture, and exercise of our own reason in subserviency unto his teaching. But this church requires us to renounce them *both*, in compliance with herself. And can it stand in competition with him? He is infallible, the *unction* is truth, and it is no lie; the Spirit is truth. This also indeed that *church pretends* unto; but with such an open affront unto all evidence of truth, as the world never underwent from any of its people before. He is absolutely, infinitely, eternally *free from any design*, but the glory of God, the present and eternal good of them that are instructed by him. It will be very difficult for those of *Rome* to pretend hereunto. Yea, it is apparent, that all the exercise of their *instructing authority* lieth in a subserviency unto their own interest. When I see that men by a pretence hereof, have gotten unto themselves *wealth, power, principalities, dominions*, with great revenues, and do use them all unto their own advantage, and mostly to the satisfaction of their lusts, pleasures, pride, ambition, and the like inordinate affections, I confess I cannot be free to deliver up blindfold the conduct of my soul unto them. He is full of *divine love* and care of the souls of them whom he doth instruct; is it so with them, or can any creature participate in his love and care? He is infinitely wise, and 'knoweth all things, yea the deep things of God,' and can make known what he pleaseth of them unto us: as the apostle discourseth; 1 Cor. ii. They who preside in that church are ignorant themselves as all men are, and the less

they know it, the more ignorant they are; yea, for the most part, as unto *sacred things*, they are comparatively so, with respect unto other ordinary men. As a late *pope*, when some of their divines waited for an infallible determination of a *theological controversy* among them, confessed, that *he had not studied those things, nor had the knowledge of them been his profession.*

But yet, notwithstanding these and several other differences between these *teachers*, it is marvellous to consider how many betake themselves unto the *latter of them*, and how few unto the *former*. And the reason is, because of the different *methods* they take in teaching, and the different *qualifications* they require in them that are to be taught. For as unto them whom the Spirit of God undertaketh to instruct, he requireth that they be *meek* and *humble*, that they give themselves unto *continual prayer, meditation*, and study in the word *day and night;* above all that they endeavour a conformity in their whole souls and lives unto the truths that he instructs them in. These are hard conditions unto *flesh and blood;* few there are who like them, and therefore, few they are who apply themselves unto the *school of God.* We may be admitted *scholars* by the other *teacher* on far cheaper and easier rates. Men may be made good *Catholics* as to faith and understanding, without the least cost in *self-denial*, or much trouble unto the flesh in any other duty. There is no qualification required for the admission of a man into the *Catholic schools*, and barely to be there, is to be wise and knowing enough. Wherefore, although all advantages imaginable, as unto the *teachers*, lie on the one hand, yet the pretended easy way of learning casts the multitude on the other. For it requireth more wisdom than we have of ourselves, to be at all that charge and pains in spiritual duty, and diligence in the use of all means for the right understanding of the mind of God, which is required in and of all them, who will advantageously partake of the teachings of the Holy Spirit; when it is supposed we may have all the ends which we aim at thereby, in an easy and naked assent unto the proposals of the church, without the least farther charge or trouble. But these are the measures of *slothful and carnal minds*, who prefer their ease, their lusts, and pleasures, before their souls. There is difficulty in all things that are excellent. Neither

can we partake of the excellency of any thing unless we will undertake its difficulty. But although the ways whereby we may come unto a participation of the teaching of the Holy Ghost, seem at first rough and uneasy, yet unto all that engage in them, they will be found to be, 'ways of pleasantness and paths of peace.'

It may be said, That it is evident in common experience, that many men do attain a great knowledge and skill in the things revealed in the Scripture, without any of that internal teaching by the *illumination* of their minds, which is pleaded for; especially if it be to be obtained by the means now intimated, and afterward more fully to be declared. For they themselves do renounce the necessity of any such teaching, and esteem all that is spoken of it a vain imagination; and not only so, but live some of them in an open defiance of all those qualifications and duties which are required unto a participation of these teachings. Yet it is foolish to pretend they are not skilled in the knowledge of *divinity*, seeing it is plain that they excel most other men therein; and therefore do sufficiently despise all them who pretend unto any benefit by the *supernatural illumination* contended for.

I answer briefly in this place, It is true there are, and ever were, some, yea many, who 'profess that they know God, but in works deny him, being abominable and disobedient.' The knowledge which such men may attain, and which they make profession of, belongs not unto our inquiry; and we may easily discern both what it is in itself, and wherein it differs from that true knowledge of God, which it is our duty to have. For,

1. There is in the Scripture with respect unto the mind and will of God revealed therein, with the mysteries of truth and grace, mention of γνῶσις and ἐπίγνωσις; 'knowledge' and 'acknowledgment.' The former, if it be alone, affects only the *speculative part* of the mind with notions of truth. And it is of very little use, but subject unto the highest abuse; 1 Cor. viii. 1. ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῖ. It is that which *puffs up men* into all their proud contentions about religion, which the world is filled withal. The other gives the mind an experience of the power and efficacy of the truth known or discovered; so as to transform the soul and all its affections

into it; and thereby to give a *full assurance of understanding* unto the mind itself; Phil. i. 9. Luke i. 4. Col. i. 6. 9, 10. ii. 2. iii. 10. Rom. x. 2. Eph. i. 17. iv. 13. 1 Tim. ii. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 25. iii. 7. Tit. i. 1. 2 Pet. i. 2, 3. 8. ii. 20. It is not worth disputing at all, what knowledge of the first kind, or what degree therein, men, any men, the worst of men, may attain by their industry and skill in other common arts and sciences. For what if they should make such a proficiency therein, as to be filled with pride in themselves, and to confound others with their subtle disputations: will any real profit redound hence unto themselves, or the world, or the church of God? It doth not, therefore, deserve the least contention about it. But that *acknowledgment* of the truth which affects the heart, and conforms the soul unto the will of God revealed, is not attainable in any degree without the *saving illumination* of the Spirit of God.

2. Men may have a knowledge of *words*, and the *meaning* of propositions in the Scripture, who have no knowledge of the *things themselves* designed in them. The things revealed in the Scripture are expressed in propositions whose words and terms are intelligible unto the common reason of mankind. Every rational man, especially if he be skilled in those *common sciences and arts* which all writings refer unto, may, without any especial aid of the Holy Ghost, know the meaning of the *propositions* that are laid down in, or drawn from, the Scripture. Yea, they can do so, who believe not one word of it to be true; and they do so, as well as the best of them who have no *other help* in the understanding of the Scripture, but their own reason, let them profess to believe what they will. And whatever men understand of the meaning of the words, *expressions*, and *propositions* in the Scripture, if they believe not the *things* which they declare, they do not in any sense *know the mind and will of God* in them. For to know a thing as the mind of God, and not to assent unto its truth, implieth a contradiction. I shall never grant that a man understands the Scripture aright, who understands the words of it only, and not the things which is the mind of God in them. For instance, the *Jews* understand the words of the Scripture of the Old Testament in its own original language. And they are able to perceive the *grammatical sense* and construction of the propositions contained

in it. They are unacquainted with them and their writings, who will not acknowledge their skill, subtilty, and accuracy in these things. Yet will not any Christian say they *understand the mind of God* in the Old Testament: the apostle sheweth the contrary, and giveth the reason for it in the place before insisted on; 2 Cor. iii. Such a knowledge of the Scripture no wise man will value, let it be attained how it will.

3. This knowledge that may be thus attained doth only *inform the mind* in the way of an *artificial science*, but doth not really *illuminate* it. And to this end men have turned *divinity* into an *art* like other common human arts and sciences, and so they learn it instead of a *spiritual wisdom and understanding of divine mysteries*. It is true, that the knowledge of common learned arts and sciences is of great use unto the understanding of the Scripture, as unto what they have in *common* with other writings, and what they refer unto that is of human cognizance; but to bring in all the terms, notions, and rules of those *arts and sciences into divinity*, and by the mixture of them with it, to compose a *scheme* of divine knowledge, is all one as if a man should design to make up his *house* of the *scaffolds*, which he only useth in the building of it. Such is that knowledge of the mind of God in the Scripture, which many aim at, and content themselves withal. And it may be attained as any other *art* or *science* may, without any supernatural aid of the Holy Spirit, and is sufficient to *drive a trade with*, which, as things are stated in the world, men may use and exercise unto their great advantage. But, as was said before, it was not that which we inquire after. That wisdom in the mystery of the gospel, that knowledge of the mind and will of God in the Scripture, which *affects the heart*, and *transforms the mind* in the renovation of it unto the approbation of the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, as the apostle speaks, Rom. xii. 2. is alone valuable and desirable, as unto all spiritual and eternal ends.

4. It doth not give *πάντα πλοῦτον τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ*, 'all riches of full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God,' as, Col. ii. 2. the apostle speaks: it gives unto men no other assurance of mind in the things that they know, but what they have from acknowledged principles

and conclusions drawn from them, in any other science. But that knowledge which men have of the mysteries of the gospel by the teaching and illumination of the Holy Spirit, gives them *the riches of assurance of understanding* of a higher nature, even the assurance of faith. That assurance, I say, which believers have in spiritual things, is of another nature and kind, than can be attained out of conclusions that are only rationally derived from the most evident principles. And, therefore, doth it produce effects of another nature both in doing and in suffering. For this is that which effectually and infallibly puts them on all those duties and that obedience in self-denial, and the mortification of sin, which the world either knoweth not or despiseth. 'For he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as God is pure;' 1 John iii. 3. And this also enables them cheerfully and joyfully to suffer all that the world can inflict on them for the profession of those truths whereof they have that assurance. But nothing of this ensues on that common knowledge which men may have from themselves of sacred things. For,

5. It doth not enable men to *trust in God,* and adhere firmly unto him by love. The psalmist speaking unto God, saith, 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee;' Psal. ix. 10. 'To know the name of God,' is to know the revelations that he hath made of himself, his mind and his will in the Scripture. They that have this knowledge, he affirms, 'will put their trust in him.' Therefore, it is certain, that those who *put not their trust in God,* have not the knowledge of him. There is a γνῶσις ψευδωνύμος, 'a knowledge falsely so called,' which hath nothing of real spiritual knowledge but the name. And it is generally much given to disputing, or the maintaining of antithesises, or oppositions unto the truth; 1 Tim. vi. 20. But it is *falsely* called *knowledge,* inasmuch as those in whom it is, do neither *trust* in God, nor *adhere* unto him in love. And we shall not much inquire, by what means such a knowledge may be acquired.

It remaineth, therefore, notwithstanding this objection, that all real useful knowledge of the 'wonderful things' that are in the Scripture, is an effect of God's *opening our eyes* by the illuminating grace of his Holy Spirit.

1. And this will enable us 'to try the spirits,' as we are

commanded, of many amongst us. For some there are who at once have cast off a due respect unto their *rule* and *guide*, the Scripture and Holy Spirit of God. Some formerly have pretended unto such a guidance by the *Spirit*, as that they have neglected or rejected the *written word*. And some pretend such an adherence unto the *word*, and such an ability in their own minds and reasons to understand it, as to despise the *teaching of the Spirit*. Others reject both the one and the other, betaking themselves unto another *rule* and *guide*, whereunto they ascribe all that belongs unto either or both of them. But a wandering *light* it hath proved unto them, that hath lead them into a bog of many vain imaginations and corrupt opinions. And it is fallen out with them as might be expected. For although the *Holy Spirit* be promised *to lead us into all truth*, yet is he so in an especial manner unto those which concern the person, offices, and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ immediately, whose Spirit he is. See John xvi. 13—15. 1 John ii. 27. Those, therefore, who renounce a dependance on him for instruction out of the word, are either left unto palpable *ignorance* about these things, or unto *foolish corrupt imaginations* concerning them. Hence some of them openly deny, some faintly grant, but evidently corrupt, the truth, concerning the person of Christ; and as unto his offices and grace, they seem to have little regard. And what else can be expected from such who despise the *teaching of that Spirit* of Christ, who is promised to lead us into all truth concerning him. Nor will the loudest pretences of some unto *the Spirit* in this matter relieve them. For we inquire not after *every spirit*, that any one who will, may make his boast of, but of that Spirit alone which instructs us in and by the written word. Until such men will return unto the only rule and guide of Christians, until they will own it their duty to seek for the knowledge of truth from the Scripture alone, and in their so doing depend not on any thing in themselves, but the saving instructions of the Spirit of God, it is in vain to contend with them. For they and we build on divers foundations, and their faith and ours are resolved into divers principles; ours into the Scripture, theirs into a light of their own. There are, therefore, no common acknowledged *principles* between us, whereon we may convince each other. And this is the cause that disputes with

such persons are generally fruitless, especially as immixed with that intemperancy of reviling other men, wherein they exceed. For if that be a way either of learning or teaching of the truth, it is what the Scripture hath not instructed us in. When the *veil* shall be taken from their eyes, and they turned unto the Lord, they will learn more modesty and humility. In the mean time, the issue between these men and us, is this and no other. We persuade men to take the Scripture as the *only rule*, and the holy promised Spirit of God, sought by ardent prayers and supplications in the use of all means appointed by Christ for that end, *for their guide*. They deal with men to turn into themselves, and to attend unto the light within them: whilst we build on these most distant principles, the difference between us is irreconcilable, and will be eternal. Could we come to an agreement here, other things would fall away of themselves. If we shall *renounce the Scripture*, and the instruction given out of it unto the church by the Spirit of God, betaking ourselves unto *our own light*, we are sure it will teach us nothing, but either what they profess, or other things altogether as corrupt. And if they on the other hand, will forego their attendance to their pretended light, to hearken unto *the voice of God in the Scripture* only, and to beg sincerely the guidance of the Holy Spirit therein, they will learn from thence no other thing but what we profess. Until, therefore, they return unto *the law and testimony*, without which, whatsoever is pretended, there is no *light* in any, we have no more to do, but labouring to preserve the flock of Christ in the profession of the *truth once delivered unto the saints*, to commit the difference between the *word and Spirit* on the one hand, and the *light within* on the other, unto the decision of Jesus Christ at the last day.

2. It is from no other root that the contempt of the mysteries of the gospel, and the preferring of other doctrines before them, is sprung up into so much bitter fruit among us. It is by the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation* alone, that our minds are enlightened to know what is the hope of God's calling, and what are the riches of his glorious grace. What is his work herein upon our minds, and what upon the word itself, shall be afterward declared. At present, from what hath been proved, it is sufficiently evident, that without his especial gracious aid and assistance, no man can discern, like, or ap-

prove, of the mysteries of the gospel. And is it any wonder, if persons who avowedly deny most of his *blessed operations*, should be either unacquainted with, or dislike, those *mysteries*, so as to prefer that which is more suited unto their natural understanding and reason above them? For why should men esteem of those things which they do not understand, at least as they ought, nor will make use of the means whereby they may be enabled so to do? Wherefore, if there be persons of such a pride and profaneness, as to undertake an inquiry into the Scriptures, to know the mind of God in them, and teach it unto others, without prayers and supplications for the teaching, leading, guidance, and assistance of the Holy Spirit, or which is worse, contemn and despise all those things as *enthusiastical*, it may not be expected that they should ever understand, or approve of, the mysteries that are contained therein. Is it not hence that both teachers and hearers make so *slow a progress* in the knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel, or grow so little in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? How many are there amongst us, who for the time, and outward means are become as *babes*, and have need of *milk*, and not of strong meat? Whence is it that so many teachers do so little endeavour *to go on to perfection*, but content themselves to dwell on the rudiments or *first principles* of our profession? Is there not great studying, and little profiting? great teaching, and little learning? much hearing, and little thriving? Do we abide in prayer, and abound in prayer, as we ought, for that Spirit who *alone can lead us into all truth?* for that *unction which teaches us all things* with assurance and experience. I fear here lieth our defect. However, this I shall say, that there is no duty, which in this world we perform unto God, that is more acceptable unto him, than *fervent prayers*, for a right understanding of his mind and will in his word. For herein all the glory we give unto him, and the due performance of all our obedience, do depend.

CHAP. IV.

The especial work of the Holy Spirit in the illumination of our minds unto the understanding of the Scripture, declared and vindicated. Objections proposed and answered. The nature of the work asserted. Psal. cxix. 18. Eph. i. 18. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Col. i. 13. Luke xxiv. 25. John v. 20. *opened and vindicated.*

We have, as I suppose, sufficiently confirmed our first general assertion concerning *the necessity of an especial work of the Holy Ghost, in the illumination of our minds, to make us understand the mind of God as revealed in the Scripture.*

That which we proceed unto, is to shew the *especial nature* of his work herein. And I shall take occasion thereunto from the consideration of an objection that is laid against the whole of what we affirm, which was touched on before.

For it is said, that there is no need of this endeavour: 'All men do acknowledge that the aid of the Spirit of God is necessary unto the study and interpretation of the Scripture. And so it is unto all other undertakings that are good and lawful. And herein consists the blessing of God upon man's own diligence and endeavours. If this be that which is intended, namely, the blessing of God upon our endeavours in the use of means, it is granted. But if any thing else be designed, it is nothing, but to take off all industry in the use of means, to reject all helps of reason and learning, which is in the end to reduce into perfect enthusiasms.'

Ans. 1. Whether by the assignation of his *own work* unto the Spirit of God, we take away or weaken the use of *other means* for the right interpretation of the Scriptures, will be tried when we come unto the examination of those ways and means. At present I shall only say, that we establish them. For by assigning unto them their proper place and use, we do manifest their worth and necessity. But those by whom they or any of them are advanced into the place, and unto the *exclusion*, of the operation of the Holy Spirit, do destroy them, or render them unacceptable unto God, and

useless unto the souls of men. We shall, therefore, manifest that the *assignations* which we make in this matter unto the Holy Spirit, do render all our use of proper means for the right *interpretation of the Scripture,* in a way of duty, indispensably necessary; and the principal reason, so far as I can understand, why some deny the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit herein, is because they like not those means whose necessary use doth arise from an admission thereof.

But thus it hath fallen out in other things. Those who have declared any thing either of the *doctrine,* or of the *power* of the grace of the gospel, have been traduced as opposing the principles of morality and reason, whereas on their grounds alone, their true value can be discovered, and their proper use directed. So the apostle preaching faith in Christ with righteousness, and justification thereby, was accused to have made void the law, whereas without his doctrine the law would have been void, or of no use to the souls of men. So he pleads, Rom. iii. 31. 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid, yea we establish the law.' So to this day, justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, and the necessity of our own obedience, the efficacy of divine grace in conversion, and the liberty of our own wills, the stability of God's promises, and our diligent use of means, are supposed inconsistent. So it is here also. The necessity of the communication of spiritual light unto our minds to enable us to understand the Scriptures, and the exercise of our own reason in the use of external means, are looked on as irreconcilable. But as the apostle saith, 'Do we make void the law by faith? yea we establish it;' though he did it not in that place, nor unto those ends that the Jews would have had and used it. So we may say, do we by asserting the righteousness of Christ, make void our own obedience; by the efficacy of grace, destroy the liberty of our wills; by the necessity of spiritual illumination, take away the use of reason? yea we establish them: we do it not, it may be, in such a way, or in such a manner, as some would fancy, and which would render them all on our part really useless, but in a clear consistency with, and proper subserviency unto, the work of God's Spirit and grace.

2. That in particular which lieth before us is, to remove

that pretence of some, *that we need no other assistance of the Spirit of God for thē right understanding of the Scripture, but only his blessing in general on our own endeavours.* To this end two things are to be inquired into: 1. What description is given of this *work* in the Scripture, and what are the effects of it in our minds in *general.* 2. What is the *nature of it in particular.*

1. The work itself is variously expressed in the Scripture. And it is that which, whether we will or no, we must be determined by in things of this kind. And the variety of expression serves both unto the confirmation of its truth, and illustration of its nature.

(1.) It is declared by *opening of our eyes;* Psal. cxix. 18. *The enlightening of the eyes of our understanding;* Eph. i. 18. This *opening of our eyes* consists in the communication of spiritual light unto our minds by the preaching of the word, as it is declared, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. And the expression, though in part *metaphorical,* is eminently instructive in the nature of this work. For suppose the nearest and best disposed proposition of any object unto our bodily eyes, with an external light properly suited unto the discovery of it, yet if our *eyes be blind,* or are closed beyond our own power to *open* them, we cannot discern it aright. Wherefore, on a supposition of the proposal unto our minds of the divine truths of supernatural revelation, and that in ways and by means suited unto the conveyance of it unto them, which is done in the Scripture, and by the ministry of the church with other outward means; yet without this work of the Spirit of God, called the *opening of our eyes,* we cannot discern it in a due manner. And if this be not intended in this expression, it is no way *instructive,* but rather suited to lead us into a misunderstanding of what is declared, and of our own duty.' So it is plainly expressed, Luke xxiv. 25. 'Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.' None, I suppose, will deny but that it is the work of the Spirit of God thus *to open our eyes,* or to *enlighten our understandings,* for this were to deny the express testimonies of the Scripture, and those frequently reiterated. But some say, he doth this by the *word* only, and the preaching of it. No other work of his, they affirm, is necessary hereunto, or to make us rightly to discern the mind of God

in the Scripture, but that it be proposed unto us in a due manner, provided we purge our minds from prejudices, and corrupt affections. And this is the work of the Spirit in that he is the *author of the Scriptures,* which he makes use of for our illumination. And it is granted, that the Scripture is the only external means of our illumination. But in these testimonies it is considered only as the object thereof. They express a work of the Spirit or grace of God *upon our minds,* with respect unto the Scripture as its object; 'open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.' The law or the Scripture, with the wonderful things contained therein, are the *things to be known,* to be discovered and understood. But the means enabling us thereunto, is an *internal work* upon our minds themselves, which is plainly expressed in distinction from the *things to be known.* This is the sum of what we plead, there is an efficacious work of the Spirit of God, opening our eyes, enlightening our understandings or minds, to understand the things contained in the Scripture, distinct from the objective propositions of them in the Scripture itself, which the testimonies urged do fully confirm.

(2.) It is expressed, as a *translation out of darkness into light,* he hath called us out of 'darkness into marvellous light;' 1 Pet. ii. 9. 'delivered us from the power of darkness;' Col. i. 13. whereby we who were 'darkness became light in the Lord;' Eph. v. 8. That in these and the like testimonies, the removal of the inward darkness of our minds, by the communication of spiritual light unto them, and not merely the objective revelation of truth in the Scripture is intended, I have proved at large elsewhere, and therefore, shall not again insist thereon.

(3.) It is directly called, *the giving of us an understanding;* 'we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true;' 1 John v. 20. The object of our understanding, or that which we know, is *he that is true.* God himself, even the Father, is primarily intended in this expression; for in the following words there is mention of his *Son Jesus Christ,* who is in like manner said to be *true,* because of his unity in essence with the Father. And, therefore, it is added, *That this is the true God;* ver. 21. But we are to know also what concerns *our being in*

him, and to know *him as he is eternal life.* And those things contain the substance of all evangelical revelations, which one way or other depend upon them, and are resolved into them; John xvii. 3. To know the *Father* the only true God, and the Son as the true God also in the unity of the same essence; to know that *eternal life* which was with the Father, as unto the eternal counsel and preparation of it, 1 John i. 2. and is *in the Son* for its actual communication unto us; and to know our *being in him* by a participation thereof, the things we mentioned, is to know the mind of God as revealed in the Scripture; especially these things are intended which are *foolishness* unto corrupted *reason,* and as such are rejected by it; 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. ii. 14.

And two things we are to inquire into with reference unto this knowledge:

[1.] What we are to have, to enable us unto it, and that is an *understanding.*

[2.] How we come by it, *It is given us by the Son of God.*

[1.] That which we have is διανοια; this word in all other places of the New Testament, doth constantly denote the essential faculty of our souls, which we call *understanding;* Matt. xxii. 37. Mark xii. 30. Luke x. 27. Eph. i. 18. ii. 3. iv. 18. Col. i. 21. Heb. viii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 13. 2 Pet. iii. 1. And it seems in the Scripture to be distinguished from the *mind,* by respect unto *actual exercise* only. The mind in its exercise is our understanding; but it cannot be the natural and essential faculty of our souls, that is here intended; for although our natures are corrupted by sin, and not repaired but by Jesus Christ; yet doth not that corruption nor reparation denote the *destroying* or new *creation* of this being, or the nature of those faculties, which continue the same in both estates: wherefore, the understanding here mentioned is no more *but a power and ability of mind with respect unto what is proposed unto us,* to receive and apprehend it in a due manner; we are not able of ourselves *to know him that is true, and the eternal life that is in him,* but he hath enabled us thereunto; for this *understanding* is *given* us unto that end, that we may so know him. Wherefore, whatever is proposed unto us in the gospel, or in any divine revelation, concerning these things, we cannot *know them,* at least as we ought, un-

less we have the *understanding* here mentioned given unto us, for so alone do we come by it.

[2.] It is *given* us; that a real and *effectual communication* unto us of the thing said to be *given,* is intended in this word, of giving from God, is evident from every place in the Scripture where it is used. Some contend that God is said to *give things* unto us, when *he doth what lies in him* that we may enjoy them, though we are never made partakers of them. But the assignation of this way and manner of *God's doing what lieth in him,* where the effect designed doth not ensue, not strictly restrained unto outward means, is scandalous, and fit to be exploded out of Christian *theology.* God says, 'What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done;' Isa. v. 4. But the expression hath plainly a double limitation: 1st. Unto the *use of outward means* only, concerning which God speaks in that place, and from which he elsewhere plainly distinguisheth his *giving them a new heart,* and a *new spirit,* that they shall all know him, and be all taught of him. 2ndly. Unto the *use of those outward means* that were *then established,* as the only way for the season; for even in respect unto them he did more *for his vineyard* when he granted the gospel unto it. But is it possible that any man should think or believe that God cannot really *collate grace* and mercy on the souls of men when he pleaseth? Is it not as easy with him, on our restoration by Christ, to implant *habits of grace* on our souls, as it was at first to create us in *original rectitude* and righteousness? Wherefore, although we may inquire what God *doth,* and *hath done,* in this matter, according as he hath revealed it in his word, yet to say that he doth in any thing, *what lieth in him,* though the things which he affirms himself to do, be not effected, is defective both in truth and piety. When he saith he hath done such a thing, or will do so; for us to say, No, he hath not done so, or he will not do so, but he hath done, or will do, what lies in him, that it may be so, though it never be so, nor have so been, is to make him altogether like ourselves. But on this ground some pretend that *the Son of God is said to have given men understanding,* because he hath done what is *requisite on his part* in the declaration of the gospel, that we may have it, whether ever we have it or no. But, 1st. what he is said to *have done,* he had at least a design to do,

and if he had so, why doth it not take effect? It is, they say, because of the *unwillingness of men to turn unto him,* and other *vicious habits* of their minds, which hinders them from receiving instruction. But if it be so, then, (1st.) it is supposed that men also in their teachings can *give us an understanding,* as well as the Son of God; for they may teach men the knowledge of the gospel, if they are *willing to learn,* and have no darling lusts, or *vicious habits* of mind to hinder them from learning. (2ndly.) Seeing he hath taken this work on himself, and designs its accomplishment, cannot the *Son of God by his grace* remove those *vicious habits* of the minds of men, that they may have an understanding of these things? If he *cannot,* why doth he take that on him which he cannot effect? If he *will not,* why doth he promise to do that which can never be done, without doing of what he will not do? and why is he said to do (as he is according to this interpretation of the words) which he hath not done, which he will not or cannot do. 2ndly. The giving of *an understanding* is in this place plainly distinguished from the *proposition of the things to be understood;* that consists in the doctrine of the gospel, this in an ability to comprehend and know it.

Again, the words here used, of *giving understanding,* may indeed express the actings or operations of men towards others, when an external proposal of things to be understood, with the due use of means, is intended. But yet, if under their *teaching* men do not *learn* or comprehend the things wherein they are instructed by them, they cannot properly be said to have *given them an understanding of it,* with respect unto their moral operation unto that end, but only to have *endeavoured* so to do. But when this phrase of speech is used to express *a divine* operation, which questionless may be really *physical,* and so absolutely efficacious, to interpret it concerning an *endeavour* that may, or may not succeed, is not suitable unto those thoughts that become us concerning divine operations. Nor was there any reason why the apostle should *emphatically* assign this work, unto the Son of God, and that as he is the true God, and eternal life; if no more be intended but a work of the same nature and kind, with what a man might do. And if this be the sense of the words; it is from *ourselves* and not from the *Son of God,* that there is any truth in them, as unto the event. For he might

do, it seems, what lies in him to *give an understanding;* and yet no one man in the world ever had an understanding of the nature designed; for if it may be so with any unto whom he is said to give an understanding, as it is professedly with the most; it may be so with *all:* not farther to debate these things at present, whereas so excellent a grace and mercy towards the souls of men, is here expressedly attributed unto the Son of God, as the author of it; namely, that he *gives us an understanding that we may know him, which is true;* I cannot think, that they interpret the Scripture unto his glory, whose exposition of this place consists in nothing but endeavours to prove that indeed he doth not so do.

(4.) It is expressed by *teaching, leading,* and *guiding into the truth*; John vi. 45. xvi. 13. 1 John ii. 20. 27. the places have been opened before; and two things are supposed in this expression of *teaching.* [1.] *A mind capable of instruction, leading, and conduct:* the nature must be *rational* and comprehensive of the means of instruction, which can be so *taught.* Wherefore, we do not only grant herein the use of the rational faculties of the soul, but require their *exercise* and utmost improvement: if God *teacheth* we are to *learn,* and we cannot learn but in the exercise of our minds. And it is in vain pretended, that God's communication of a supernatural ability unto our minds, and our exercise of them in a way of duty, are *inconsistent;* whereas indeed they are *inseparable* in all that we are taught of God. For at the same time that he *infuseth a gracious ability* into our minds, he proposeth the truth unto us, whereon that ability is to be exercised. And if those things are inconsistent, the whole real efficacy of God in the souls of men, must be denied; which is to despoil him of his sovereignty: but we speak now of natural ability to receive instruction, to be taught, with the exercise of it in learning. For these are supposed in the expression of the communication of a spiritual ability by *teaching.* [2.] A *teaching* suited unto that ability is promised or asserted. Three ways of this teaching are pleaded: 1st. That it consists in a *Θεοπνευστία, an immediate infallible inspiration and afflatus,* of the same nature with that of the prophets and apostles of old. But, (1st.) this takes away the distinction between the *extraordinary* and *ordinary* gifts of the Spirit, so fully asserted in the Scripture, as we shall elsewhere declare. And if it

were so, God did not place in the church *some prophets*, seeing all were so, and were always to be so. 2ndly. It brings in a neglect of the Scripture, and a levelling it into the same state and condition with the conceptions of every one that will pretend unto this *inspiration*. 3rdly. The pretence visibly confutes itself, in the manifold mutual contradictions of them that pretend unto it. And would, 4thly. thereon be a principle, first of confusion, then of infidelity, and so lead unto atheism. 5thly. The *prophets* themselves had not the knowledge and understanding of the mind and will of God which we inquire after by their *immediate inspirations*, which were unto them as the written word unto us; but had it by the same means as we have; 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. Hence they so frequently and fervently *prayed for understanding*, as we have seen in the instance of David.

Wherefore, [2.] some say this *teaching* consists only in the outward preaching of the word, in the ministry of the church and other external means of its application unto our minds. But there is not one of the testimonies insisted on, wherein this promised *teaching of God*, is not distinguished from the proposition of the word in the outward dispensation of it, as hath been proved. Besides, every one that enjoys this teaching, that is, who is taught of God, doth really believe and come to Christ thereby. John vi. 45. 'It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God: every man, therefore, that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me,' saith our blessed Saviour. But it is not thus with all, nor ever was, towards whom the most powerful and cogent means of outward instruction have been or are used.

Wherefore, [3.] this teaching is an *internal work of the Spirit*, giving light, wisdom, understanding unto our minds, so is spoken of, and promised in an especial manner, distinct from the outward work of the dispensation of the word, and all the efficacy of it singly considered. One testimony will serve to this purpose which hath been pleaded and vindicated already. It is by an *unction*, that we are thus *taught*; 1 John ii. 20, 21. But the unction consists in a real communication of supernatural gifts and graces; whereof *supernatural light* is that which is peculiarly necessary unto this end. The communication of them all, in all fulness unto Jesus Christ

the head of the church was his *unction;* Heb. i. 9. Isa. lxi. 1. Wherefore, in the real participation of them in our measure doth our unction, whereby we are taught, consist.

It is granted that this teaching is such as *regards our own industry* in the use of means appointed unto this end, that we may know the mind of God in the Scripture. But yet it is such as includes an *inward effectual operation* of the Holy Spirit concomitant with the outward means of teaching and learning. When the eunuch read the prophecy of Isaiah, he affirmed he *could not understand it* unless some one did *guide* him. Hereon Philip opened the Scripture unto him; but it was the Holy Ghost that opened his heart, that he might understand it; for so he did the heart of Lydia, without which she would not have understood the preaching of Paul; Acts xvi. 14. Wherefore, in our learning, under the conduct or teaching of the Spirit, the utmost diligence in the exercise of our own minds is required of us. And where men are defective herein, they are said to be νωθροὶ ταῖς ἀκοαῖς, Heb. v. 11. 'dull in hearing,' or slow in the improvement of the instruction given them. And it is a senseless thing to imagine that men should be diverted from the exercise of the faculties of their minds, merely because they are enabled to use them unto good purpose, or successfully, which is the effect of this internal teaching.

(5.) It is expressed *by shining into our hearts.* 'God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts; to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;' 2 Cor. iv. 6. Jesus Christ is the 'image of the invisible God, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.' And that because of the illustrious representation of all divine excellencies, that are made both in his person and his mediation. The person of the Father is the eternal fountain of infinitely divine glorious perfections; and they are all communicated unto the Son by eternal generation. In his person *absolutely* as the Son of God, they are all of them *essentially;* in his person as God-man, as vested with his offices, they are *substantially,* in opposition unto all types and shadows; and in the glass of the gospel they are *accidentally* by revelation; *really,* but not *substantially,* for Christ himself is the body, the substance of all. As the *image of God,* so is he represented unto

us in the glass of the gospel, and therein are we called *to behold the glory of God* in him; chap. iii. 18. The meaning is, that the truth and doctrine concerning Jesus Christ, his person and mediation, is so delivered and taught in the gospel, as that the glory of God is eminently represented thereby, or therein is revealed what we are to know of God, his mind and his will, as he is declared by and in Jesus Christ. But why is it then that all do not thus *behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* unto whom the gospel is preached? or whence is it that all unto whom the gospel is preached or declared do not apprehend and understand the truth, and reality, and glory of the things revealed or proposed? that is, why they do not understand the mind and will of God as revealed in the gospel? The apostle assigneth two reasons hereof: [1.] From what *hindereth it in many;* [2.] From what is *necessary unto any* that so they may do.

[1.] The first is the *efficacy of the temptations and suggestions of Satan,* whereby their minds are filled with prejudices against the gospel and the doctrine of it, being blinded hereby, they can see nothing of beauty and glory in it, and so certainly do not apprehend it aright. Ver. 4. 'The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine into them.' This is acknowledged by all to be an obstacle against the right understanding of the gospel. Unless the mind be freed from such *prejudices* as are the effects of such *blinding efficacy* of the suggestions of Satan, men cannot attain unto the true knowledge of the mind of God therein. How these prejudices are removed we shall shew afterward. But if the mind be free, or freed from them, then it is supposed by some, that there is need of no more but the due exercise of its faculties with diligence for that end, nor is any thing else required thereunto. It is true, in the ordinary dispensation of divine grace, this is required of us. But the apostle adds,

[2.] That there must, moreover, be a *divine light shining into our hearts,* to enable us hereunto. At least he doth so that this was granted unto them who *then did believe.* And if we have it not, as well as they, I fear we do not believe in the same manner as they did. Wherefore, although there be in the gospel, and the doctrine of it, an illustrious representa-

tion of the glory of God in Christ; yet are we not able of ourselves to discern it, until the Holy Spirit by an act of his almighty power do *irradiate* our minds, and implant a light upon them suited thereunto. He that doth not *behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ in the gospel,* doth not understand the mind and will of God as revealed therein, in a due manner. I suppose this will be granted, seeing both these things are but one and the same diversly expressed. But this of ourselves we cannot do. For there is an internal work of God upon our minds necessary thereunto. This also is expressed in the words. It is his *shining into our hearts to give the light of this knowledge unto us:* there is a light in the gospel; *the light of the glorious gospel of Christ;* ver. 4. But there must be a *light also in our hearts,* or we cannot discern it. And this is no natural light, or a light that is common unto all; but it is a light that, in a way of grace, is given unto them that do believe. And it is wrought in us by the same kind of efficiency, as God *created light* at the beginning of the world; namely, by a productive act of power. It is evident, therefore, that the *light in our hearts,* which God communicates unto us, that we may have the true knowledge of his mind and will in the gospel, is distinct from that *light of truth* which is in the gospel itself. The one is *subjective,* the other is *objective* only; the one is wrought in us, the other is proposed unto us; the one is an act of divine power in us, the other an act of divine grace and mercy towards us.

Other ways there are whereby this operation of the Holy Spirit in the illumination of our minds is expressed. The instances given, and testimonies considered, are sufficient unto our purpose. That which we are in the proof of is, that there is more required unto a useful apprehension and understanding of the mind of God in the Scripture, than the mere *objective proposal* of it unto us, and our diligent use of outward means to come to the knowledge of it; which yet as we shall shew is from the Holy Spirit also. And, as the denial hereof doth by just consequence make void the *principal means* whereby we may come unto such an understanding, namely, frequent and fervent prayers for the aid and assistance of the Holy Spirit; so no tolerable account can be given of the mind of God, and the meaning of the Scripture in the places insisted on. And certainly, if we cannot

understand the way and manner of the operation of the Holy Spirit herein, it were much better to *captivate our understanding unto the obedience of truth*, than to wrest and pervert the Scripture, or debase the spiritual sense of it unto a compliance with our conceptions and apprehensions. But as we have herein the suffrage of them that do believe, in their own experience, who both value and acknowledge this grace and privilege unto the glory of God; so we have multiplied instances of such as being destitute of that skill which should enable them to make use of sundry external means, which are in their proper place of great advantage, who yet by virtue of this *divine teaching* are wise in the things of God, beyond what some others, with all their skill, can attain unto.

Moreover, the *effect* of this work of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men, doth evidence of what nature it is. And this, also, is variously expressed. As,

(1.) It is called *light*. 'Ye were darkness, but are now light in the Lord;' Eph. v. 8. The introduction of light into the mind is the proper effect of illumination. Men in their natural estate, are said to be *darkness*, the *abstract* for the *concrete*, to express how deeply the mind is affected with it; for as our Saviour saith, 'If the light that is in any be darkness (as it is in them who are darkness), how great is that darkness!' Matt. vi. 23. And because men are subject to mistake herein, and to suppose themselves, with the Pharisees, to see, when they are blind, he gives that caution, 'Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness;' Luke xi. 35. For men are very apt to please themselves with the working and improvement of their natural light, which yet in the issue, with respect unto spiritual things, will prove but darkness. And while they are under the power of this darkness, that is, while their minds are deeply affected with their natural ignorance, they *cannot perceive spiritual things;* 1 Cor. ii. 14. no, not when they are most evidently proposed unto them. For, although *the light shine in darkness*, or cast out its beams in the evidence and glory of spiritual truth, yet *the darkness comprehendeth it not;* John i. 5. But by this work of the Holy Spirit we are made *light in the Lord*. Light in the mind is a spiritual ability to discern and know spiritual things, as is declared, 2 Cor. iv. 6. This is bestowed upon us, and communicated unto us by the

Holy Spirit. There is a real difference between light and darkness. And it is our minds that are affected with them; Luke xi. 35. The removal of the one, and the introduction of the other, are things not absolutely in our own power: he who is darkness, cannot make himself light in the Lord. Whatever he may do in way of disposition or preparation, in way of duty and diligence, in the utmost improvement of the natural faculties of his mind (which no man will ever rise unto who is under the power of this darkness, because of the insuperable prejudices and corrupt affections that it fills the mind withal), yet the *introduction of this light* is an act of him who openeth the eyes of our understandings, and shines into our hearts. Without this *light* no man can understand the Scripture as he ought; and I shall not contend about what they see or behold who are in darkness.

The expulsion of *spiritual darkness* out of our minds, and the introduction of *spiritual light* into them, a work so great, that they who were *darkness*, whose *light was darkness*, are made *light* in the Lord thereby, is an effect of the immediate power of the Spirit of God. To ascribe other low and *metaphorical* senses unto the words, is to corrupt the Scripture, and to deny the testimony of God. For this *light* he produceth in us by the same power, and the same manner of operation, whereby he brought light out of darkness at the creation of all things. But by this way and means it is, that we attain the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ, or the revelation of his mind and will in the gospel.

(2.) It is called *understanding*. So the psalmist prays, 'Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law;' Psal. cxix. 34. So the apostle speaks to Timothy, 'Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things;' 2 Tim. ii. 7. Besides his own *consideration* of what was proposed unto him, which includes the due and diligent use of all outward means: it was moreover necessary that *God should give him understanding* by an inward effectual work of his Spirit, that he might comprehend the things wherein he was instructed. And the desire hereof, as of that without which there can be no saving knowledge of the word, nor advantage by it, the psalmist expresseth *emphatically* with great fervency of spirit; Psal. cxix. 144. 'The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting. O give me understanding

and I shall live.' Without this, he knew that he could have no benefit by the everlasting righteousness of the testimonies of God. All understanding indeed, however it be abused by the most, is the work and effect of the Holy Ghost. For 'the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding;' Job xxxii. 8. So is this spiritual understanding in an especial manner. And in this understanding both the ability of our minds and the due exercise of it is included. And this one consideration, that the saints of God have with so much earnestness prayed that God would *give them understanding in his mind and will,* as revealed in the word, with his reiterated promises that he would so do, is of more weight with me, than all the disputes of men to the contrary. And there is no farther argument necessary to prove that men do not understand the mind of God in the Scripture in a due manner, than their supposal and confidence that so they can do, without the communication of a *spiritual understanding* unto them by the Holy Spirit of God; which is so contrary unto the plain express testimonies thereof.

(3.) It is called *wisdom.* For by this work on the minds of men they are rendered *wise* unto salvation. So the apostle prays for the Colossians, 'That God would fill them with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;' chap. i. 9. These things may be the same, and the latter *exegetical* of the former. If there be a difference, *wisdom* respects things in general, in their whole *system* and *complex; understanding* respects particulars as they are to be reduced unto practice. Wherefore, the spiritual understanding which the apostle prays for, respects the mind of God, in especial or particular places of the Scripture; and wisdom is a skill and ability in the comprehension of the whole system of his counsel, as revealed therein. He who is thus *made wise,* and he alone, can *understand* the things of God, as he ought; Dan. xii. 10. Hos. xiv. 9. Psal. cvii. 45. Although men may bear themselves high on their learning, their natural abilities, their fruitful inventions, tenacious memories, various fancies, plausibility of expression, with long study and endeavours, things good and praiseworthy in their kind and order; yet unless they are thus *made wise* by the Spirit of God, they will scarce attain a due acquaintance with his mind and will. For this effect of that work is also

expressly called *knowledge;* Col. i. 9. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Eph. i. 17. Col. iii. 10. Wherefore, without it we cannot have that which is properly so called.

This is the second thing designed in this discourse. In the first it was proved in general, that there is an *effectual operation of the Spirit of God on the minds of men,* enabling them to perceive and understand the supernatural revelations of the Scripture when proposed unto them. And in the second is declared, what is the *nature of that work,* and what are the effects of it on our minds. Both of them have I treated merely from Scripture testimony. For in vain shall we seek to any other way or means for what we ought to apprehend and believe herein. Neither is the force of these testimonies to be eluded by any distinctions or *evasions* whatever. Nor whilst the authority of the Scripture is allowed, can any men more effectually evidence the weakness and depravation of their *reason,* than by contending that in the exercise of it, they can understand the mind and will of God, as revealed therein, without the especial aid and illumination of the Spirit of God. Nor can any man on that supposition, with any wisdom or consistency in his own principles, make use, in a way of duty, of the principal means whereby we may so understand them, as will afterward more fully appear.

CHAP. V.

Causes of the ignorance of the mind of God revealed in the Scripture; and of errors about it; what they are; and how they are removed.

THE supposition we proceed upon in this discourse is, that *God hath revealed his mind and will unto us, as unto all things concerning his worship, with our faith and obedience therein, in the Holy Scripture.* Thereon do we inquire, by what means we may attain the *saving knowledge* of the mind of God so revealed. And my principal design is to shew, what *aid and assistance* we receive of the Holy Ghost unto that end. To farther us in the knowledge hereof, I shall inquire into the *causes and reasons of that ignorance,* and those misapprehensions of the mind of God as revealed, which are amongst men, and how our minds are delivered from them.

It may be this part of our discourse might have had a more proper place assigned unto it, after we have given the truth pleaded a more full confirmation. But whereas an objection may arise from the consideration of what we shall now insist on, against the truth contended for; I thought it not amiss so to obviate it, as therewithal farther to illustrate the doctrine itself, which we labour in.

All men see, and most men complain of, that ignorance of the mind of God, and those abominable errors, attended with false worship, which abound in the world. How few are there who understand and believe the truth aright? What *divisions*, what *scandals*, what *animosities*, what *violence*, mutual rage, and persecutions, do ensue hereon, among them that are called Christians, is likewise known. Hence some take occasion to countenance themselves in an open declension unto *atheism*, some unto a great *indifferency* in all religion, some to advance themselves and destroy others, by the advantage of their opinions, according as they are prevalent in some times and places. A brief inquiry into the causes of that *darkness* and *ignorance* which is in the world amongst men outwardly owning the doctrine of the gospel, and especially of the *errors* and *heresies* which do abound above what they have done in most ages, may be of use to preserve us from those evils. A subject this is, that would require much time and diligence unto the handling of it in a due manner. I intend only at present to point at the *heads of some few things*, the observation whereof may be of use unto the end designed.

Those of the Roman church tell us, that the cause hereof is the *obscurity, difficulty, and perplexity of the Scripture*. If men will trust thereunto as their only guide, they are sure to miscarry. Wherefore, the only relief in this matter is, that we give up our souls unto the *conduct of their church*, which neither can err nor deceive. So indeed said Adam of old, when he was charged with his sin and infidelity; 'The woman that thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.' But whereas it is an evil, yea, the greatest of evils, whose causes we inquire after, it seems in general more rational that we should seek for them in *ourselves*, than in any thing that God hath done. For he alone is good and we are evil.

It is granted that God hath given us his word, or the holy Scriptures as a declaration of his mind and will; and therefore, he hath given it unto us for this very end and purpose, that we may know them and do them. But whereas many men do fail herein, and do not understand aright what is revealed, but fall into pernicious errors and mistakes unto his dishonour and their own ruin, is it meet to say unto God, that this comes to pass from hence, because the revelation he hath made of these things is *dark, obscure, and intricate?* or the Scripture which thou hast given us doth deceive us? would a due reverence or deferency unto the wisdom, goodness, and love of God unto mankind be preserved therein;

> Audax omnia perpeti
> Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas.[a]

What will not the prejudices and corrupt interests of men carry them out into? God will for ever preserve those that are his, in an abhorrency of that religion, be it what it will, that by any means leads unto an undervaluation of that revelation of himself, which in infinite wisdom and goodness he hath made unto us.

But is it because there is *no reason* to be given of this evil from the minds of men themselves, that it is thus ascribed unto God? May not as well all the wickednesses that the world is filled withal be ascribed unto him and what he hath done? Doth not each one see a *sufficient cause* hereof even in himself, if he were not delivered from it by the power of the Spirit and grace of God? Do not other men who fail in the right knowledge of God, especially in any important truths, sufficiently evidence in other things, that the root of this matter is in themselves? Alas! how dark are the minds of poor mortals, how full of pride and folly? I shall say with some confidence, he who understands not that there is reason enough to charge all the errors, ignorance, and confusions in religion, that are, or ever were, in the world, without the least censure of obscurity, insufficiency, or intricacy in the Scripture, *on the minds of men*, and those depraved affections whose prevalency they are obnoxious unto, are themselves profoundly ignorant of the state of all things above and here below.

We must, therefore, inquire after the causes and reasons of these things among ourselves, for there only they will be found.

[a] Horat. Od. lib. I. 3. 25.

And these causes are of two sorts: 1. *That which is general,* and the spring of all others; 2. *Those which are particular,* that arise and branch themselves from thence.

1. The first and general cause of all ignorance, error, and misunderstanding of the mind and will of God, as revealed in the Scripture, among all sorts of men, whatever their particular circumstances are, is the *natural vanity and darkness with which the minds of all men are depraved.* The nature of this depravation of our minds by the fall, and the effects of it, I have fully elsewhere declared. Wherefore, I now take it for granted, that the minds of all men are naturally prepossessed with this darkness and vanity, from whence they are not, from whence they cannot, be delivered but by the saving illumination of the Spirit and grace of God. But because I have so largely treated of it both in the 'Discourses of the Dispensation of the Spirit,' Book iii. ch. 3. as also in those concerning the 'Apostacy of these latter times,' I shall not again insist upon it.

Two things I shall only observe unto our present purpose: namely, (1.) *That hereby the mind is kept off from discerning the glory and beauty of spiritual heavenly truth,* and from being sensible of its power and efficacy; John i. 5. (2.) That it is by the same means, *inclined unto all things that are vain, curious, superstitious, carnal,* suited unto the interest of pride, lust, and all manner of corrupt affections. Hence, whatever other occasions of error and superstition may be given or taken, the ground of their reception, and of all adherence unto them, is the *uncured vanity and darkness* of the minds of men by nature. This is the mire wherein this rush doth grow.

And the consideration hereof, will rectify our thoughts concerning those whom we see daily to *wander from the truth,* or to live in those misapprehensions of the mind of God, which they have imbibed, notwithstanding the clear revelation of it unto the contrary. Some think it strange that it should be so, and marvel at them: some are angry with them, and some would persecute and destroy them. We may make a better use of this consideration; for we may learn from it the *sad corruption and depravation of our minds in our estate of apostacy from God.* Here lies the seed and spring of all the sin, evil, and disorder, which we behold and suffer under in religious concerns in this world. And if we consider it aright, it will serve,

[1.] To impress *a due sense of our own condition upon our minds,* that we may be humbled. And in *humility* alone there is safety. 'His soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him;' Hab. ii. 4. for he *draws back from God,* and God hath no pleasure in him, as the apostle expounds those words; Heb. x. 38. It was in the principles of our nature, to adhere sacredly unto the *first truth,* to discern and abhor every false way: we were created with that *light of truth* in our minds, as was every way able to guide us, in all that we had to believe or do, with respect unto God, or our own blessedness for ever. But in the room thereof, through our wretched *apostacy from God,* our mind is become the seat and habitation of all vanity, disorder, and confusion. And no way doth this more discover itself, than in the readiness and proneness of multitudes, to embrace whatever is crooked, perverse, and false in religion, notwithstanding the *clear revelation* that God hath made of the whole truth concerning it in the Scripture. A due reflection hereon, may teach us *humility* and self-abasement. For we are by nature children of wrath, even as others; neither have we any good thing that we have not received. It is better, therefore, to be conversant with such thoughts on this occasion, than to be filled with *contempt of,* or *wrath against,* those whom we see yet suffering under those woful effects of the general *apostacy* from God, wherein we were equally involved with them. Yea,

[2.] It will teach us *pity and compassion* towards those whose minds do run out into the spiritual excesses mentioned. The merciful high-priest of the whole church 'hath compassion on the ignorant, and them that wander out of the way;' Heb. v. 2. and it is conformity unto him in all things, which ought to be our principal design, if we desire to be like unto him in glory. Want hereof is the ruin of religion, and the true cause of all the troubles that its profession is encumbered withal at this day.

It is true, for the most part, there is an interposition of corrupt affections seducing the minds of men from the truth. With these are they tossed up and down, and so driven with the winds of temptations that befal them. But is it *humanity* to stand on the shore, and seeing men in a *storm* at sea, wherein they are ready every moment to be cast away, and perish, to *storm* at them ourselves, or to shoot them to death,

or to cast fire into their vessel, because they are in danger of being drowned? Yet no otherwise do we deal with them whom we persecute, because they miss the knowledge of the truth, and it may be raise a worse *storm* in ourselves, as to our own *morals*, than they suffer under in their *intellectuals*. Concerning such persons the advice of the apostle is, 'Of some have compassion making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire;' Jude 22, 23. Some are so given up in their apostacy, as that they *sin unto death*, with such we are not to concern ourselves; 1 John v. 16. But it is very rare that we can safely make that judgment concerning any in this world. Sometimes, no doubt, we may, or this rule concerning them had never been given. As unto all others, the worst of them, those that *are in the fire*, the frame of our minds acting towards them, are here presented unto us; compassion of their present state, and *fear* of their future ruin, we ought to be possessed with, and acted by. But how few are they who are so framed and minded towards them, especially such as by their enormous errors seem to be fallen into the fire of God's displeasure? Anger, wrath, fury, contempt, towards such persons, men think to be their duty; more contrivances there are usually how they may be *temporally destroyed*, than how they may be *eternally saved*. But such men profess the truth as it were by chance. They never knew what it is to learn it aright, nor whence the knowledge of it is to be received, nor were ever under its power or conduct. Our proper work is to *save such persons*, what lies in us, *pulling them out of the fire*. Duties of difficulty and danger unto ourselves, may be required hereunto: it is easier, if we had secular power with us, to thrust men into *temporal fire* for their errors, than to free them from *eternal fire* by the truth. But if we were governed with compassion for their souls, and fear of their ruin, as it is our duty to be, we would not decline any office of love required thereunto.

[3.] Hath God *led us into the truth*, hath he kept us from every false way, it is evident that we have abundant cause of gratitude and fruitfulness. It is a condition more desperate than that of the most pernicious errors, to *hold the truth in unrighteousness;* and as good not know the Lord Jesus Christ, as to be barren in the knowledge of him. It is not, we see, of *ourselves*, that we either know the truth, or love

it, or abide in the profession of it. We have nothing of this kind, but what we have received; *humility* in ourselves, *usefulness* towards others, and *thankfulness* unto God, ought to be the effect of this consideration.

This is the first general cause of men's misapprehension of the mind and will of God, as revealed in the Scripture. The revelation itself is plain, perspicuous, and full of light. 'But this light shineth into darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.' The natural darkness and blindness which is in the minds of men, with the vanity and instability which they are attended with, causeth them to wrest the Scriptures unto their own destruction. And for this sort of men to complain, as they do horribly in the *papacy*, of the obscurity of the Scripture, is all one as if a company of blind men should cry out of an *eclipse of the sun*, when he shineth in his full strength and glory. How this darkness is removed and taken away by the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit in our illumination, I have elsewhere at large discoursed.

2. *Corrupt affections*, prevalent in the minds of men, do hinder them from a right understanding of the mind of God in the Scripture. For hereby are they effectually inclined to wrest and pervert the truth, or are filled with prejudices against it. This is the *next cause* of all ignorance and error, where we must seek for the particular causes of them before proposed. The principal reason why the generality of men attain not a right understanding of the mind and will of God in the Scripture, is the *corrupt affections* that are predominant in their own minds, whereby they are exposed unto all sorts of impressions and seductions from Satan, and the agents for his kingdom and interest. So the apostle tells us, that 'unlearned and unstable men, do wrest the Scripture unto their own destruction;' 2 Pet. iii. 16. And another, that these 'unlearned and unstable persons, are men of corrupt minds;' 1 Tim. vi. 5. 2 Tim. iii. 8. that is, such whose minds are peculiarly under the power of perverse and corrupt affections. For these affections are θελήματα τῆς διανοίας, Eph. ii. 3. The *wills of the mind*, such as carry it with an impetuous inclination towards their own satisfaction, and such as render it obstinate and perverse in its adherence thereunto. These are the root of that *filthiness and superfluity of naughti-*

ness which must be cast out before we can 'receive the ingrafted word with meekness;' James i. 11. Some few of them may be named.

(1.) *Pride, or carnal confidence* in our own wisdom and ability of mind for all the ends of our duty towards God, and this in especial of understanding his mind and will, either keeps the souls of men under the bondage of darkness and ignorance, or precipitates them into foolish apprehensions or pernicious errors. As spiritual pride is the worst sort of pride, so this is the worst degree of spiritual pride; namely, when men do not acknowledge God in these things as they ought, but lean unto their own understandings. This is that which ruined the Pharisees of old, that they could not understand the mind of God in any thing unto their advantage. It is the *meek*, the *humble*, the *lowly in mind*, those that are *like little children*, that God hath promised to teach. This is an eternal and unalterable law of God's appointment, that whoever will learn his mind and will as revealed in the Scripture, must be *humble* and *lowly*, renouncing all trust and confidence in themselves. And whatever men of another frame do come to know, they know it not according to the mind of God, nor according to their own duty, nor unto their advantage. Whatever *knowledge* they may have, however *conspicuous* it may be made by their natural and *acquired abilities*, however it may be garnished with a mixture of secular literature, whatever contempt it may raise them unto of others, such as the Pharisees had of the *people*, whom they esteemed *accursed because they knew not the law*, yet they knew nothing as they ought, nothing unto the glory of God, nothing to the spiritual advantage of their own souls; and wherein is their knowledge to be accounted of? Indeed the knowledge of a proud man, is the throne of Satan in his mind. To suppose that persons under the predominancy of pride, self-conceit, and self-confidence, can understand the mind of God, as revealed in a due manner, is to renounce the Scripture, or innumerable positive testimonies given in them unto the contrary. Such persons cannot make use of any one means of spiritual knowledge that God requires of them in a way of duty, nor improve any one truth which they may know unto their good. Therefore our Saviour tells the proud Pharisees, notwithstanding

all their skill in the *letter* and *tittles* of the Scripture, 'That they had not heard the voice of God at any time, nor seen his shape, neither had they his word abiding in them;' John v. 37, 38. They had no right knowledge of him, as he had revealed and declared himself.

Men infected with this *leaven*, having their minds tainted with it, have been the great corrupters of divine truth, in all ages. Such have been the ringleaders of all *heresies*, and such were they, who have turned the knowledge of the will of God proposed in the Scripture, into a *wrangling science* filled with niceties, subtilties, curiosities, *futilous terms of art*, and other fuel for the minds of fiery contenders in wrangling disputations.

And this kind of *self-confidence* is apt to befal all sorts of men. Those of the meanest capacity may be infected with it, no less than the wisest or most learned. And we frequently see persons, whose weakness in all sound knowledge, and insufficiency for the use of proper means unto the attaining of it, might seem to call them unto *humility and lowliness of mind* in an eminent manner, yet lifted up unto such a degree of *spiritual pride* and conceit of their own understandings, as to render them useless, troublesome, and offensive unto men of sober minds. But principally are they exposed hereunto, who either really, or in their own apprehensions, are *exalted above others* in secular learning, and natural or acquired abilities. For such men are apt to think that they must needs know the meaning of the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures better than others, or at least, that they can do so, if they will but set themselves about it. But that which principally hinders them from so doing, is their conceit that so they do. They mistake that for divine knowledge which is in them the great *obstruction* of it.

(2.) The *love of honour and praise among men* is another corrupt affection of mind, of the same nature and efficacy with that before named. This is so branded by our Saviour as an insuperable obstacle against the admission of *sacred light* and truth, that no more need be added thereunto. See John v. 44. xii. 43.

(3.) *A pertinacious adherence unto corrupt traditions and inveterate errors* quite shuts up the way unto all wisdom and spiritual understanding. This ruined the church of the *Jews*

of old, and makes at present that of the Romanists incurable. What their forefathers have professed, what themselves have imbibed from their infancy, what all their outward circumstances are involved in, what they have advantage by, what is in reputation with those in whom they are principally concerned, that shall be the *truth* with them and nothing else. Unto persons whose minds are wholly vitiated with the leaven of this corrupt affection, there is not a line in the Scripture whose sense can be truly and clearly represented. All appears in the colour and figure that their prejudices frame in their minds. When the Lord Christ came forth first unto the preaching of the gospel, there 'came a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear him;' Matt. xvii. 5. Neither was this command given unto them alone who heard it immediately from the *excellent glory* as Peter speaks, 2 Pet. i. 17. but as recorded in the word, is given equally unto every one, that would learn any thing of the mind and will of God in a due manner. No man can learn but by the *hearing of him;* unto him are we sent for the learning of our spiritual knowledge. And no other way doth he speak unto us but by his word and Spirit. But where the minds of men are prepossessed with apprehensions of what they have received from the authority of other teachers, they have neither desire, design, readiness, nor willingness to hear *him*. But if men will not forego all pre-imbibed opinions, prejudices, and conceptions of mind, however riveted into them by traditions, custom, veneration of elders, and secular advantages, to hearken unto and receive whatever he shall speak unto them, and that with a humble, lowly frame of heart, they will never learn the truth, nor attain *a full assurance of understanding* in the mysteries of God. These inveterate prejudices, are at this day those which principally shut out the truth, and set men together by *the ears* all the world over, about religion and the concerns thereof. Hence is all the strife, rage, tumult, and persecution that the world is filled withal. Could men but once agree to lay down all those presumptions which either wit, or learning, or custom, or interest, and advantage have influenced them withal, at the feet of Jesus Christ, and resolve in sincerity to comply with that alone which he doth teach them, and to forego whatever is

inconsistent therewith; the ways unto *truth and peace* would be more laid open than otherwise they are like to be.

(4.) *Spiritual sloth* is of the same nature, and produceth the same effect. The Scripture frequently giveth us in charge to use the utmost of our diligence in the *search* of, and for the finding out of, spiritual truth, proposing unto us the example of those that have done so before; Josh. i. 8. Psal. i. 1. Prov. ii. 2—6. John v. 39. 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. And any rational man would judge that if it had not been so expressly given us in charge from God himself, if it had not been a means appointed and sanctified unto this end, yet that the *nature of the thing* itself, with its importance unto our duty and blessedness, are sufficient to convince us of its necessity. It is *truth*, it is *heavenly truth*, we inquire after: that, on the knowledge or ignorance whereof, our eternal blessedness or misery doth depend. And in a due perception thereof alone, are the faculties of our minds perfected according to the measure which they are capable of in this life. Therein alone can the mind of man find rest, peace, and satisfaction, and without it must always wander in restless uncertainties, and disquieting vanities. It is a notion implanted on the minds of all men, that all *truth lies deep*, and that there is great difficulty in the attainment of it. The minds of most are imposed on by specious appearances of falsehood. Wherefore, all wise men have agreed that *without our utmost care and diligence* in the investigation of the truth, we must be contented to walk in the shades of ignorance and error. And if it be thus in earthly things, how much more is it so in heavenly? As spiritual *supernatural truth* is incomparably to be valued above that which relates unto things natural; so it is more abstruse, and of a more difficult investigation. But this *folly* is befallen the minds of the generality of men, that of all things they suppose there is least need of pains and diligence to be used in an inquiry after those things which *the angels themselves desire to bow down and look into*, and which the prophets of old inquired and searched after with all diligence. Whatever be their notion hereof, yet practically it is evident, that most men through *pride* and *sloth*, and *love of sin*, are wholly negligent herein. At least they will not apply themselves to those spiritual means, without the use whereof the knowledge of *divine truth* will

not be attained. It is generally supposed that men may be as wise in these things as they need to be, at a very easy rate. The folly of men herein can never be enough bewailed; they regard spiritual truth as if they had no concernment in it, beyond what custom and tradition puts them on, in reading chapters or hearing sermons: they are wholly under the power of *sloth*, as unto any means of spiritual knowledge.

Some indeed will labour diligently in the study of those things which the Scripture hath in common with other *arts and sciences;* such are the languages wherein it was writ, the stories contained in it, the ways of arguing which it useth with *scholastical accuracy* in expressing the truth supposed to be contained in it. These things are great in themselves, but go for nothing when they are alone. Men under the utmost efficacy of *spiritual sloth* may be diligent in them, and make a great progress in their improvement. But they are spiritual objects and duties that this sloth prevails to alienate the minds of men from, and make them negligent of; and what are those duties I shall afterward manifest.

The consideration I say, of the state of things in the world, gives so great an evidence of probability, that, what through the *pride and self-conceit* of the minds of many, refusing a compliance with the means of spiritual knowledge, and excluding all gracious qualifications indispensably required unto the attaining of it; what through *the power of corrupt traditions,* imprisoning the minds of men in a fatal adherence unto them, preventing all thoughts of a holy ingenuous inquiry into the mind of God, by the only safe infallible revelation of it; and what *through the power of spiritual sloth* indisposing the minds of the most unto an immediate search of the Scripture; partly with apprehensions of its difficulty, and notions of learning the truth contained in it by other means; and what through a *traditional course of studying divinity,* as an art or science to be learned out of the writings of men; the number is very small of them who diligently, humbly, and conscientiously endeavour to learn the truth from the voice of God in the Scripture, or to grow wise in the mysteries of the gospel by such ways as wherein alone that wisdom is attainable. And, is it any wonder, if many, the greatest number of men, wander after vain imagi-

nations of their own or others, whilst the truth is neglected or despised?

(5.) Again, there is in the minds of men by nature a *love of sin*, which causeth them to *hate the truth;* and none can understand it but those that love it. In the visible church most men come to know of the truth of the gospel as it were whether they will or no. And the general design of it they find to be a *separation between them and their sins.* This sets them at a distance from it in affection, whereon they can never make any near approach unto it in knowledge or understanding. So we are assured, John iii. 19, 20. 'Light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.' Persons under the power of this frame take up under the shades of ignorance, and corrupt imaginations. And if they should attempt to learn the truth they would never be able so to do.

Lastly, Satan by his temptations and suggestions doth variously affect the minds of men, hindering them from discerning the mind of God, as revealed in the Scripture. 'The god of this world blinds the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them;' 2 Cor. iv. 4. The ways and means whereby he doth so, the instruments which he useth, the artifices and methods which he applieth unto his ends, with his application of himself unto them according unto all occasions, circumstances, opportunities, and provocations, in great variety, were worth our inquiring into, but that we should too much digress from our present design.

I have but mentioned these things, and that as *instances* of the true original causes of the want of understanding, and misunderstanding of the revelation of the mind of God in the Scripture. Many more of the same nature might be added unto them, and their effectual operations unto the same end, be declared. But the mention of them here is only *occasional,* and such as will not admit of a farther discussion. But by these and the like depraved affections it is, that the *original darkness* and enmity of the minds of men against spiritual truth, and all the mysteries of it do exert themselves;

and from them do all the error, superstition, and false worship that the world is filled withal, proceed. For,

Whilst the minds of men are thus affected, as they cannot understand and receive divine spiritual truths, in a due manner, so are they ready and prone to embrace whatever is contrary thereunto. If, therefore, it be the work of the Spirit of God alone in the renovation of our minds to free them from the power of these *vicious depraved habits*, and consequently the advantages that Satan hath against them thereby, there is an especial work of his necessary to enable us to learn the truth as we ought. And for those who have no regard unto these things, who suppose that in the study of the Scripture all things come alike unto all, to the clean and to the unclean, to the humble and the proud, to them that hate the garments spotted with the flesh, and those that both love sin and live in it, they seem to know nothing either of the design, nature, power, use, or end of the gospel.

The removal of these hinderances and obstacles is the work of the Spirit of God alone. For,

1. He alone communicates that *spiritual light* unto our minds, which is the foundation of all our relief against these obstacles of, and oppositions unto, a saving understanding of the mind of God.

2. In particular he freeth, delivereth, and purgeth our minds from all those *corrupt affections* and prejudices, which are partly inbred in them, partly assumed by them, or imposed on them. For the artifice of Satan in turning the minds of men from the truth, is by bringing them under the power of corrupt and vicious habits, which expel that frame of spirit which is indispensably necessary unto them that would learn it. It is indeed our *duty* so to purify and purge ourselves. We ought to cast out all 'filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness,' that we 'may receive the ingrafted word with meekness;' James i. 21. 'To purge ourselves from these things, that we may be vessels unto honour, sanctified and meet for our master's use, and unto every good work;' 2 Tim. ii. 21. If it be not thus with us, let the pride and folly of men pretend what they please, we can neither learn, nor know, nor teach, the mind of God as we ought. And what men may do without giving glory unto God, or the

bringing of any spiritual advantage unto their own souls, we inquire not, seeing it belongeth only *equivocally* unto Christian religion. But although it is our duty thus to *purge ourselves*, yet it is by *the grace of the Holy Spirit* that so we do. Those who under a pretence of our own duty would exclude in any thing the efficacious operations of the Holy Ghost; or, on the other hand, on the pretence of his grace and its efficacy, would exclude the necessity of diligence in our duties; do admit but of one half of the gospel, rejecting the other. The whole gospel asserts and requireth them both unto every good act and work. Wherefore, the *purging of ourselves* is that which is not absolutely in the power of our natural abilities. For these corrupt affections possess, and are predominant in the mind itself, and all its actings are suited unto their nature, and influenced by their power. It can never, therefore, by its own native ability free itself from them. But it is the work of this great purifier and sanctifier of the church, to free our minds from these corrupt affections, and inveterate prejudices, whereby we are alienated from the truth, and inclined unto false conceptions of the mind of God. And unless this be done, in vain shall we think to learn the truth as it is in Jesus. See 1 Cor. vi. 11. Tit. iii. 3, 4. Rom. viii. 13. Eph. iv. 20—24.

3. He implants in our minds *spiritual habits and principles* contrary and opposite unto those corrupt affections, whereby they are subdued and expelled. By him are our minds made *humble, meek*, and *teachable*, through a submission unto the authority of the word, and a conscientious endeavour to conform ourselves thereunto.

It was always agreed that there were ordinarily preparations required unto the receiving of divine illuminations; and in the assignation of them many have been greatly deceived. Hence some in the expectation of receiving *divine revelations*, have been imposed on by *diabolical delusions*, which by the working of their imaginations they had prepared their minds to give an easy admission unto. So was it among the Heathen of old, who had invented many ways unto this purpose, some of them horrid and dreadful. And so it is still with *all enthusiasts*. But God himself hath plainly declared what are the *qualifications* of those souls, which are meet to be made partakers of divine teachings, or ever shall

be so. And these are, as they are frequently expressed, *meekness, humility, godly fear, reverence, submission of soul and conscience* unto the authority of God, with a *resolution* and readiness for and unto all that obedience which he requireth of us, especially that which is internal in the hidden man of the heart. It may be some will judge that we wander very far from the matter of our inquiry; namely, *How we may come unto the knowledge of the mind of God in the Scripture,* or we may aright understand the Scripture, when we assign these things as means thereof, or preparations thereunto. For although these are good things (for that cannot be denied), yet it is *ridiculous* to urge them as necessary unto this end, or of any use for the attaining of it. Learning, arts, tongues, sciences, with the rules of their exercise, and the advantage of *ecclesiastical dignity,* are the things that are of use herein, and they alone. The most of these things and sundry other of the same kind, we acknowledge to be of great use unto the end designed, in their proper place; and what is the due use of them shall be afterward declared. But we must not forego what the Scripture plainly instructeth us in, and which the nature of the things themselves doth evidence to be necessary, to comply with the arrogance and fancy of any, or to free ourselves from their contempt.

It is such an understanding of the Scripture, of the *divine revelation* of the mind of God therein, as wherein the spiritual illumination of our minds doth consist, which we inquire after; such a knowledge as is useful and profitable unto the proper ends of the Scripture towards us, that which we are taught of God, that we may live unto him. These are the ends of all true knowledge. See 2 Tim. iii. 14—17. And for this end the furnishment of the mind with the graces before mentioned is the best preparation. He bids defiance unto the gospel by whom it is denied. 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.' Whatever be the parts or abilities of men, whatever diligence they may use in the investigation of the truth, whatever *disciplinary* knowledge they may attain thereby, the Spirit of God never did, nor ever will, instruct *a proud unhumbled soul* in the right knowledge of the Scripture as it is a divine revelation. It is by these *gracious qualifications alone* whereby we may be enabled to cast out all filthiness and superfluity of naughti-

ness, so as to receive the ingrafted word with meekness, which is able to save our souls.

Our blessed Saviour tells us, 'that unless we be converted, and become as little children, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;' Matt. xviii. 3. We cannot do so, unless we become *humble, meek, tender, weaned from high thoughts of ourselves,* and are purged from prejudices by corrupt affections, and I value not that knowledge which will not conduct us into the *kingdom of heaven,* or which shall be thence excluded. So God hath promised that 'the meek he will guide in judgment, the meek he will teach his way; the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant; and what man is he that feareth the Lord, him shall he teach in the way;' Psal. xxv. 9. 12. 14. And so we are told plainly, that 'evil men understand not judgment, but they that fear the Lord understand all things;' Prov. xxviii. 5.

Now all these graces whereby men are made teachable, capable of divine mysteries, so as to *learn the truth as it is in Jesus,* to understand the mind of God in the Scriptures, are wrought in them by the Holy Spirit, and belong unto his work upon our minds in our illumination. Without this the *hearts* of all men are *fat,* their *ears heavy,* and their *eyes sealed,* that they can neither hear, nor perceive, nor understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

These things belong unto the work of the Holy Spirit upon our minds (as also sundry other instances might be given unto the same purpose); in our illumination, or his enabling of us rightly to understand the mind of God in the Scripture. But, whereas whoever is thus by him *graciously prepared* and disposed, shall be taught in the knowledge of the will of God, so far as he is concerned to know it in point of duty, if so be he abide in the ordinary use of outward means, so there are sundry other things necessary unto the attaining of farther useful degrees of this knowledge and understanding; whereof I shall treat afterward.

CHAP. VI.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the composing and disposal of the Scripture as a means of sacred illumination; the perspicuity of the Scripture unto the understanding of the mind of God declared and vindicated.

THERE is yet another part of the work of the Holy Spirit with respect unto the *illumination* of our minds, which must also be inquired into. And this concerneth the *Scripture* itself. For this he hath so given out, and so disposed of, as that it should be a moral way or means for the communication of *divine revelations* unto the minds of men. For this also is an effect of his infinite wisdom and care of the church designing to enlighten our minds with the knowledge of God, he prepared apt instruments for that end. That, therefore, which we shall declare on this head of our discourse is, that *the Holy Spirit of God hath prepared and disposed of the Scripture, so as it might be a most sufficient and absolutely perfect way and means of communicating unto our minds that saving knowledge of God and his will which is needful, that we may live unto him, and come unto the enjoyment of him in his glory.* And here sundry things must be observed.

First, The Holy Spirit hath not in the Scripture reduced and *disposed its doctrines or supernatural truths into any system, order, or method.* Into such a method are the principal of them disposed in our *catechisms*, and *systems of divinity, creeds*, and *confessions of faith.* For whereas the doctrinal truths of the Scripture have a mutual respect unto, and dependence on, one another, they may be disposed into such an order to help the understandings and the memories of men. There is indeed in some of the Epistles of Paul, especially that unto the Romans, a methodical disposition of the most important doctrines of the gospel. And from thence are the best methods of our teaching borrowed. But *in the whole Scripture* there is no such thing aimed at. It is not distributed into *common places*, nor are all things concerning the same truth *methodically* disposed under the same head: but its contexture and frame is quite of another nature. From this consideration some think they have an advantage to charge the

Scripture with *obscurity:* and do thereon maintain that it was never intended to be such a *revelation of doctrines* as should be the rule of our faith. Had it been so, the truths to be believed would have been proposed in some order unto us, as a *creed,* or *confession* of faith, that we might at once have had a view of them, and been acquainted with them. But whereas they are now left to be gathered out of a *collection of histories, prophecies, prayers, songs, letters,* or *epistles,* such as the Bible is composed of, they are difficult to be found, hard to be understood, and never perfectly to be learned. And doubtless the way fancied would have been excellent, had God designed to effect in us only an *artificial* or *methodical faith* and obedience. But if we have a due regard unto the *use of the Scripture* and the ends of God therein, there is no weight in this objection. For,

1. It is evident that the whole of it consists in the *advancement of men's own apprehensions* and imaginations against the will and wisdom of God. It is a sufficient reason to prove this the *absolute best way* for the disposal of divine revelations, because God hath made use of this and no other. One indeed is reported to have said, that had he been *present at the creation of the universe, he would have disposed some things into a better order, than what they are in.* For vain man would be wise, though he be like the wild ass's colt. And no *wiser* or better are the thoughts, that the revelation of supernatural truths might have been *otherwise disposed of,* with respect unto the end of God, than as they are in the Scripture. God puts not such value upon men's *accurate methods* as they may imagine them to deserve. Nor are they so subservient unto his ends in the revelation of himself, as they are apt to fancy; yea, oft-times, when, as they suppose, they have brought truths unto the *strictest propriety of expression,* they lose both their power and their glory. Hence is the world filled with so many *lifeless, sapless, graceless,* artificial declarations of divine truth in the *schoolmen* and others. We may sooner squeeze water out of a pumice stone, than one drop of spiritual nourishment out of them. But how many millions of souls have received divine light and consolation, suited unto their condition, in those *occasional occurrences* of truth which they meet withal in the Scripture, which they would never have

obtained in those wise *artificial disposals of them* which some men would fancy. Truths have their power and efficacy upon our minds, not only from *themselves,* but from their *posture* in the Scripture. There are they placed in such *aspects* towards, in such *conjunctions* one with another, as that their *influences* on our minds do greatly depend thereon. He is no *wise man,* nor exercised in those things, who would part with any one truth out of its proper place, where the Holy Spirit hath disposed and fixed it. The psalmist saith of God's testimonies, they are, אנשי עצתי, 'the men of his counsel;' Psal. cxix. 24. And no man will make choice of a *counsellor,* all whose wisdom consists in *sayings* and *rules* cast into a certain *order* and *method.* He alone is a good *counsellor,* who out of the largeness and wisdom of his own heart and mind, can give advice according unto all present occasions and circumstances. Such counsellors are the testimonies of God. Artificial methodizing of spiritual truths, may make men ready in notions, cunning and subtle in disputations, but it is the Scripture itself that is able to *make us wise unto salvation.*

2. In the writing and composing of the Holy Scripture, the Spirit of God had respect unto the *various states and conditions of the church.* It was not given for the use of one age or season only, but for all generations, for a guide in faith and obedience from the beginning of the world to the end of it. And the state of the church was not always to be the same, neither in light, knowledge, nor worship. God had so disposed of things in the eternal counsel of his will, that it should be carried on by various *degrees of divine revelation* unto its perfect estate. Hereunto is the revelation of his mind in the Scripture subservient and suited; Heb. i. 1. If all divine truths had from the first been stated and fixed in a *system of doctrines,* the state of the church must have been always the same, which was contrary unto the whole design of divine wisdom in those things.

3. Such a *systematical proposal of doctrines,* truths, or articles of faith, as some require, would not have answered the great ends of the Scripture itself. All that can be supposed of benefit thereby, is only, that it would lead us more easily into a *methodical comprehension* of the truths so proposed. But

this we may attain and not be rendered one jot more *like unto God* thereby. The principal end of the Scripture is of another nature. It is to beget in the minds of men, faith, fear, obedience, and reverence of God, to make them holy and righteous; and those such as have in themselves various weaknesses, temptations, and inclinations unto the contrary, which must be obviated and subdued. Unto this end every truth is disposed of in the Scripture as it ought to be. If any expect that the Scripture should be written with respect unto *opinions, notions* and *speculations,* to render men *skilful* and cunning in them, able to talk and dispute about *all things* and *nothing,* they are mistaken. It is given us to make us *humble, holy, wise* in spiritual things, to direct us in our *duties,* to relieve us against *temptations,* to comfort us under *troubles,* to make us to love God and to live unto him, in all that variety of circumstances, occasions, temptations, trials, duties, which in this world we are called unto. Unto this end there is a more glorious power and efficacy in one *epistle,* one *psalm,* one *chapter,* than in all the writings of men, though they have their use also. He that hath not experience hereof, is a stranger unto the power of God in the Scripture. Sometimes the design and scope of the place, sometimes the circumstances related unto, mostly that *spirit of wisdom and holiness* which evidenceth itself in the whole, do effectually influence our minds. Yea, sometimes an *occasional passage in a story,* a word or expression, shall contribute more to excite faith and love in our souls, than a volume of learned disputations. It doth not *argue, syllogize,* or *allure* the mind; but *enlightens, persuades, constrains* the soul unto faith and obedience. This it is prepared for, and suited unto.

4. The disposition of divine revelations in the Scripture is *subservient unto other ends* also of the wisdom of God towards the church, some of them may be named.

(1.) *To render useful and necessary the great ordinance of the ministry.* God hath not designed to instruct and save his church by any one outward ordinance only. The ways and means of doing good unto us, so as that all may issue in his own eternal glory, are known unto infinite wisdom only. The institution of the whole *series and complex* of divine ordinances, is no otherwise to be accounted for but by a regard and submission thereunto. Who can deny but that God might both

have instructed, sanctified, and saved us, without the use of *some* or *all* of those institutions which he hath obliged us unto. His infinitely *wise will* is the only reason of these things. And he will have every one of his appointments on which he hath *put his name* to be honoured, such is the *ministry*. A means this is not *co-ordinate* with the Scripture, but *subservient* unto it. And the great end of it is, that those who are called thereunto, and are furnished with gifts for the discharge of it, might diligently *search the Scripture*, and teach others the mind of God revealed therein. It was, I say, the will of God, that the church should ordinarily be always under the conduct of such a *ministry*. And his will it is, that those who are called thereunto, should be furnished with *peculiar spiritual gifts*, for the finding out and declaration of the truths that are treasured up in the Scripture, unto all the ends of divine revelation; see Eph. iv. 11—16. 2 Tim. iii. 14—17. The Scripture, therefore, is such a revelation as doth suppose and make necessary this ordinance of the ministry, wherein and whereby God will also be glorified. And it were well if the *nature and duties* of this office were better *understood* than they seem to be. God hath accommodated the revelation of himself in the Scripture with respect unto them. And those by whom the due discharge of this office is despised or neglected, do sin greatly against the authority, wisdom, and love of God. And those do no less by whom it is assumed, but not rightly understood, or not duly improved.

But it may be said, Why did not *the Holy Ghost dispose of all things so plainly in the Scripture, that every individual person might have attained the knowledge of them without the use of this ministry*. I answer, (1.) It is a proud and foolish thing to inquire for any reasons of the ways and works of God, antecedent unto his own will. 'He worketh all things according to the counsel of his will;' Eph. i. 11. and therein are we to acquiesce. Yet we may see the wisdom of *what he hath done*. As herein, (1.) he would glorify his own power, in working great effects by *vile weak means;* 1 Cor. iii. 7. 2 Cor. iv. 7. (2.) He did it to magnify his Son Jesus Christ in the communication of *spiritual gifts;* Acts ii. 33. Eph. iv. 8—12. (3.) To shew that in and by the work of his grace he designed not to destroy or contradict the faculties of our nature which

at first he created; he would work on them, and work a change in them, by means suited unto their constitution and nature; which is done in the *ministry* of the word; 2 Cor. v. 18—20.

(2.) The *disposition of the Scripture* respects the duty of all believers in the exercise of their faith and obedience. They know that all their light and direction, all their springs of spiritual strength and consolation, are treasured up in the Scripture. But in the unspeakable variety of their occasions, they know not *where every particular provision for these ends* is stored. Hence it is their duty to *meditate upon the word night and day*, to search for wisdom as silver, and to dig for it as for hidden treasure, 'that they may understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God;' Prov. ii. 3—5. And this being a duty whereunto the exercise of all grace is required, they are all improved thereby. The soul which is hereby engaged unto constant converse with God, will thrive more in that which is the proper end of the Scripture; namely, *the fear of the Lord*, than it could do under any other kind of teaching.

(3.) *A continual search into the whole Scripture, without a neglect of any part of it*, is hereby rendered necessary; and hereby are our souls prepared on all occasions, and influenced in the whole course of our obedience: for the whole and every part of the word is blessed unto our good, according to the prayer of our Saviour. 'Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth;' John xvii. 17. There is power put forth, in and by every part and parcel of it, unto our sanctification. And there is such a distribution of *useful truths* through the whole, that every where we may meet with what is prepared for us, and suited unto our condition. It is to me no small argument of the *divine original of the Scripture*, and of the presence of God in it, that there is no *thought of our hearts* with respect unto the proper end of the Scripture; that is, our living unto God, so as to come unto the enjoyment of him, but that we shall find, at one time or other, a due *adjustment* of it therein, in one place or other.

There can no *frame* befal the hearts of believers, as unto spiritual things, whether it be as unto their *thriving* or *decays*, but there is a disposition of spiritual provision for it; and oft-times we shall find it then opening itself when we least

looked for it. *Powerful instructions, as unto our practice,* do often arise out of circumstances, occasional words and expressions, all arguing an infinite wisdom in their provision, whereunto every future occurrence was in open view from eternity, and a present divine efficacy in the word's application of itself unto our souls. How often in the reading of it, do we meet with, and are as it were surprised with, *gracious words,* that enlighten, quicken, comfort, endear, and engage our souls? How often do we find sin wounded, grace encouraged, faith excited, love inflamed, and this in that endless variety of inward frames, and outward occasions, which we are liable unto? I shall say with confidence, that he never was acquainted with the *excellency of the Scripture,* with its power and efficacy in any holy experience, who is capable of fancying that divine revelations might have been disposed unto more advantage with respect unto our living unto God. And these things are sufficient for the removal of the objection before mentioned.

Secondly, The Holy Spirit hath so disposed of the Scripture, *that the mind of God in all things concerning our faith and obedience, in the knowledge whereof our illumination doth consist, is clearly revealed therein.* There needs no other argument to prove any thing *not to belong* unto our religion, than that it is *not revealed,* or appointed in the Scripture; no other to prove any truth not to be *indispensably necessary* unto our faith or obedience, than that it is not *clearly revealed* in the Scripture. But in this assertion we must take along with us these two suppositions.

1. That we look on the Scripture and receive it *not as the word of men,* but as it is indeed the *word of the living God.* If we look for that *perspicuity* and *clearness* in the expression of divine revelation, which men endeavour to give unto the declaration of their minds, in things natural, by artificial methods and order, by the application of words and terms invented and disposed of on purpose to accommodate what is spoken unto the common notions and reasonings of men, we may be mistaken. Nor would it have become divine wisdom and authority to have made use of such methods, ways, or arts. There is that *plainness* and *perspicuity* in it which becomes the holy wise God to make use of, whose words are to be received with reverence, with submission of mind and

conscience unto his authority; and fervent prayer that we may understand his mind and do his will. Thus all things are made plain unto the meanest capacity; yet not so, but if the most wise and learned do not see the characters of infinite divine wisdom on things that seem most obvious and most exposed unto vulgar apprehensions, they have no *true wisdom* in them. In those very *fords* and appearing *shallows* of this river of God, where the *lamb* may wade, the *elephant* may swim: every thing in the Scripture is so plain as that the *meanest believer* may understand all that belongs unto his duty, or is necessary unto his happiness; yet is nothing so plain, but that the wisest of them all have reason to adore the depths and stores of divine wisdom in it. All apprehensions of the obscurity of the Scripture arise from one of those two causes:

(1.) That the minds of men are prepossessed with *opinions, dogmas, principles,* and practices in religion, received by tradition from their fathers; or have vehement and corrupt inclinations, unto such ways, practices, and opinions, as suit their carnal reason and interest. It is no wonder if such persons conceive the Scripture *dark and obscure.* For they can neither find that in it which they most desire, nor can understand what is revealed in it, because opposite unto their prejudices, affections, and interests. The design of the Scripture is to *destroy that frame of mind in them which they would have established.* And no man is to look for *light* in the Scripture, to give countenance unto his own *darkness.*

(2.) It will apear *obscure* unto all men who come to the reading and study of it in the *mere strength of their own natural abilities.* And, it may be, it is on this account that some have esteemed St. Paul *one of the obscurest writers that ever they read.* Wherefore, as a book written in Greek or Hebrew must be obscure unto them who have no skill in those languages; so will the Scripture be unto all, who are unfurnished with those spiritual preparations which are required unto the right understanding of it. For,

2. It is supposed, when we assert the *clearness and perspicuity* of the Scripture, that there is unto the understanding of it use made of that *aid* and *assistance* of the Spirit of God concerning which we do discourse. Without this the *clearest revelations* of divine supernatural things, will appear

as wrapped up in darkness and obscurity: not for want of *light* in them, but for want of *light* in us. Wherefore, by asserting the necessity of supernatural illumination, for the right understanding of divine revelation, we no way impeach the *perspicuity* of the Scripture. All things wherein our faith and obedience are concerned are clearly declared therein; howbeit when all is done, 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, nor can know them,' until the eyes of his understanding be enlightened.

3. The Holy Spirit hath so disposed the Scripture, that notwithstanding that *perspicuity* which is in the whole, with respect unto its proper end, yet are there in sundry parts or passages of it: (1.) τινὰ δυσνόητα, some things 'hard to be understood:' and, (2.) τινὰ δυσερμήνευτα, some things hard to be 'uttered or interpreted.' The former are the things themselves, which are so in their *own nature;* the latter are so from the *manner* of their declaration.

(1.) There are in the Scripture, τινὰ δυσνόητα, things *deep, wonderful, mysterious,* such as in their own nature do absolutely exceed the whole compass of our understanding or reason, as unto a full and perfect comprehension of them. Nor ought it to be strange unto any that sundry *divine revelations* should be of things in their own nature incomprehensible. For as unto us, many earthly and natural things are so, as David affirms, concerning the forming of our natures in the womb; Psal. cxxxix. 5, 6. 14—16. And our Saviour assures us, that heavenly things are much more above our comprehension than earthly; John iii. 12. Such as these are the *Trinity,* or the subsistence of one *single divine nature in three persons;* the *incarnation* of Christ, or the assumption of our human nature into personal union and subsistence with the Son of God; the *eternal decrees* of God, their nature, order, causes, and effects; the *resurrection* of the dead; the *manner* of the operations of the Holy Spirit in forming the new creature in us, and sundry others. Our rational faculties in their utmost improvement in this world, and under the highest advantage they are capable of, by spiritual light and grace, are not able, with all their *searchings,* to find out the *Almighty* unto perfection in these things. And in all disputes about the light of glory: as whether we shall be able thereby to behold the essence of God, to discern the depths of the

mystery of the incarnation, and the like; men do but darken 'counsel by words without knowledge,' and talk of what they neither do nor can understand. But yet the wisdom of the Holy Spirit hath in these two ways provided that we shall not suffer from our own weakness.

[1.] In that whatever is necessary for us to believe concerning these things is *plainly and clearly revealed* in the Scripture, and that revelation declared in such propositions and expressions, as are obvious unto our understandings. And he who thinks we can believe nothing as *unto its truth*, but what we can comprehend as unto its *nature*, overthrows all faith and reason also. And propositions may be clear unto us in their sense, when their subject matter is incomprehensible. For instance, consider the *incarnation of the Son of God*, and the *hypostatical union* therein of the divine and human natures, it is a thing above our reason and comprehension. But in the Scripture it is plainly asserted and declared, that the 'word which is God, and was with God,' 'was made flesh;' that 'God was manifest in the flesh;' that 'the Son of God was made of a woman, made under the law;' that 'he took on him the seed of Abraham;' that 'he came of the Jews according to the flesh,' 'who is over all God blessed for ever;' and that so God 'redeemed his church with his own blood.' Thus plainly and perspicuously is this great matter, as it is the object of our faith, as it is proposed unto us to be believed, declared and expressed unto us. If any one shall now say, that he will *not believe that to be the sense of these expressions*, which the words do plainly and undeniably manifest so to be, and are withal incapable of any other sense or construction, because he cannot understand or comprehend the thing itself which is signified thereby, it is plainly to say that he will believe nothing on the authority and veracity of God revealing it, but what he can comprehend by his own reason that he will believe; which is to overthrow all faith divine. The reason of our believing, if we believe at all, is God's *revelation of the truth*, and not our understanding of the nature of the things revealed. Thereinto is our faith resolved, when our reason reacheth not unto the nature and existence of the things themselves. And the work of the Spirit it is, to *bring into captivity* unto the obedience of the truth, every thought that might arise from our

ignorance, or the impotency of our minds to comprehend the things to be believed. And that new religion of *Socinianism*, which pretends to reduce all to reason, is wholly built upon the most irrational principle that ever befel the minds of men. It is this alone: *What we cannot comprehend in things divine and infinite, as unto their own nature, that we are not to believe in their revelation.* On this ground alone do the men of that persuasion reject the doctrine of the Trinity, of the incarnation of the Son of God, of the resurrection of the dead, and the like mysteries of faith. Whatever testimony the Scripture gives unto them, because their reason cannot comprehend them, they profess they will not believe them. A principle wild and irrational, and which leads unto atheism, seeing the being of God itself is absolutely incomprehensible.

[2.] That degree of knowledge which we can attain in and about these things is *every way sufficient with respect unto the end of the revelation itself.* If they were so proposed unto us, as that, if we could not fully comprehend them, we should have no benefit or advantage by them, the revelation itself would be lost, and the end of God frustrated therein. But this could not become divine wisdom and goodness to make such propositions unto us. For this defect ariseth not from any blamable *depravation of our nature* as corrupted, but from the very *essence and being* of it as created: for being finite and limited, it cannot perfectly comprehend things infinite. But whatever believers are able to attain unto, in that variety of the degrees of knowledge, which in their several circumstances they do attain, is *sufficient* unto the end whereunto it is designed; that is, sufficient to ingenerate, cherish, increase, and preserve faith and love, and reverence with holy obedience in them, in such a way and manner as will assuredly bring them unto the end of all supernatural revelation in the *enjoyment* of God.

(2.) There are in the Scripture τινὰ δυσερμήνευτα: some things that are 'hard to be interpreted;' not from the *nature* of the things revealed, but from the *manner* of their revelation. Such are many *allegories, parables, mystical stories, allusions, unfulfilled prophecies* and *predictions, references* unto the then *present customs, persons,* and *places, computation of times, genealogies,* the *signification of some single words seldom or but*

once used in the Scripture, the names of *divers birds* and *beasts*, unknown to us. Such things have a difficulty in them from the *manner* of their declaration. And it is hard to find out, and it may be in some instances impossible, unto any determinate certainty, the proper genuine sense of them in the places where they occur. But herein also we have a *relief* provided in the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, in giving the whole Scripture for our instruction, against any *disadvantage* unto our faith or obedience: for,

[1.] Whatever is *so delivered* in any place, if it be of importance for us to know and believe, as unto the ends of divine revelation, it is in some other place or places *unveiled* and plainly declared, so that we may say of it, as the disciples said unto our Saviour; 'Lo, now he speaketh plainly and not in parables.' There can be no instance given of any obscure place or passage in the Scripture, concerning which a man may rationally suppose or conjecture, that there is any *doctrinal truth* requiring our obedience contained in it, which is not elsewhere explained. And there may be several reasons why the Holy Spirit chose to express his mind at any time in such ways as had so much *obscurity* attending of them.

1st. As for *types, allegories, mystical stories,* and *obscure predictions,* he made use of them on purpose under the Old Testament to draw a *veil* over the things signified in them, or the truths taught by them. For the church was not yet to be acquainted with the clear knowledge of the things concerning Jesus Christ and his mediation; they had not so much as a *perfect image* of the things themselves, but only an *obscure shadow* or representation of good things to come; Heb. x. 1. To have given unto them *a full and clear revelation* of all divine truths would have cast the whole design of God for the various states of the church, and the accomplishment of the great work of his grace and love, into disorder. It was not hard then for the church to be taught of old in *types and allegories,* but it was much grace and mercy that through them the light of the *sun of righteousness* so far beamed on them, as enabled them comfortably to wait until the day did break and the shadows flee away; as Cant. iv. 6. The fulness and glory of the revelation of *grace and truth*

was reserved for Jesus Christ. God did them no wrong, but reserved 'better things for us;' Heb. xi. 40.

2ndly. Whatever seems yet to be continued under any obscurity of revelation, it is so continued for the *exercise of our faith, diligence, humility, and dependance on God,* in our inquiries into them. And suppose we do not always attain precisely unto the proper and peculiar intendment of the Holy Spirit in them, as we can never search out his mind unto perfection, yet are there so many and great advantages to be obtained by the due exercise of those graces in the study of the word, that we can be no *losers* by any difficulties we can meet withal. The rule in this case is, that we *affix no sense unto any obscure or difficult passage of Scripture, but what is materially true, and consonant unto other express and plain testimonies.* For men to raise peculiar senses from such places, not confirmed elsewhere, is a dangerous curiosity.

3rdly. As to sundry *prophecies of future revolutions in the church and the world,* like those in the revelation, there was an indispensable necessity of giving them out in that obscurity of *allegorical expressions* and *representations* wherein we find them. For I could easily manifest, that as the clear and determinate declaration of *future events* in plain *historical expressions* is contrary to the nature of *prophecy:* so in this case it would have been a means of bringing confusion on the works of God in the world, and of turning all men out of the way of their obedience. Their present revelation is sufficient to guide the faith, and regulate the obedience of the church so far as they are concerned in them.

4thly. Some things are in the Scripture disposed on purpose that *evil, perverse,* and *proud men* may *stumble and fall at them,* or be farther hardened in their unbelief and obstinacy. So our Lord Jesus Christ affirms that he spake unto the *stubborn Jews in parables that they might not understand.* And whereas there must be *heresies,* that they which 'are approved may be made manifest,' 1 Cor. xi. 19. and some 'are of old ordained unto this condemnation;' Jude 4. Some things are so declared, that from them, proud, perverse, and wrangling spirits may take occasion to wrest them unto their own destruction. The truths of Christ as well as his person,

are appointed to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, yea, a gin and a snare unto many. But this, humble teachable believers are not concerned in.

[2.] The Holy Spirit hath given us a relief in this matter, by supplying us with a *rule of the interpretation of Scripture, which whilst we sincerely attend unto, we are in no danger of sinful corrupting the word of God,* although we should not arrive unto its proper meaning in every particular place. And this rule is the *analogy* or proportion of faith. 'Let him that prophesieth,' saith the apostle, that is, expoundeth the Scripture in the church, 'do it according to the proportion of faith;' Rom. xii. 6. And this *analogy,* or 'proportion of faith,' is what is taught plainly and uniformly in the whole Scripture, as the rule of our faith and obedience. When men will engage their inquiries into parts of the Scripture, *mystical, allegorical,* or *prophetical,* aiming to find out, it may be, things new and curious, without a constant regard unto this *analogy of faith,* it is no wonder if they wander out of the way and err concerning the truth, as many have done on that occasion. And I cannot but declare my detestation of those bold and curious conjectures, which without any regard unto the *rule of prophecy,* many have indulged themselves in, on obscure passages in the Scripture. But now suppose a man brings no preconceived sense or opinion of his own unto such places, seeking countenance thereunto from them, which is the bane of all interpretation of the Scripture; suppose him to come in some measure prepared with the spiritual qualifications before mentioned, and in all his inquiries have a constant due regard unto the *analogy of faith,* so as not to admit of any sense which interfereth with what is elsewhere plainly declared, such a person shall not miss of the mind of the Holy Spirit; or if he do, shall be assuredly preserved from any hurtful danger in his mistakes. For there is that mutual relation, one to another, yea that mutual in-being of all divine truths, in their proposal and revelation in the Scripture, as that every one of them is after a sort in every place, though not *properly* and *peculiarly,* yet by *consequence* and *coherence.* Wherefore, although a man should miss of the *first proper sense* of any obscure place of Scripture, which with all our diligence we ought to aim at. Yet whilst he receiveth none but what contains a truth agreeable unto what is revealed in

other places, the error of his mind neither endangereth his own faith or obedience, nor those of any others.

[3.] For those things which are peculiarly difficult, as *genealogies, chronological computations* of time, and the like, which are accidental unto the design of the Scripture, those who are able so to do unto their own edification, or others, may exercise themselves therein; and by all others, the consideration of them in particular, may be safely omitted.

And these are the heads of the *work of the Holy Spirit* on our minds, and on the Scriptures, considered distinctly and apart, with reference unto the right understanding of the *mind of God in them.* By the former sort our *minds* are prepared to understand the Scripture; and by the latter *Scripture* is prepared and suited unto our understandings. There yet remains the consideration of what he doth, or what help he affords unto us, in the *actual application of our minds unto the understanding and interpretation of the word.* And this respecteth the means which we are to make use of unto that end and purpose, and these also shall be briefly declared.

CHAP. VII.

Means to be used for the right understanding of the mind of God in the Scripture. Those which are prescribed in a way of duty.

THE means to be used for the right understanding and interpretation of the Scripture are of two sorts.

I. That which is general and absolutely necessary.

II. Such as consist in the due improvement thereof.

The first is *diligent reading of the Scripture with a sedate, rational consideration of what we read.* Nothing is more frequently recommended unto us; and, not to insist on particular testimonies, the whole cxixth Psalm is spent in the declaration of this duty, and the benefits which are attained thereby. Herein consists the first natural exercise of our minds in order unto the understanding of it. So the eunuch read and pondered on the prophecy of Isaiah, though of himself he could not attain the understanding of what he read; Acts viii. 30, 31. Either reading, or that which is equivalent thereunto, is that whereby we do, and without which it

is impossible we should apply our minds to know what is contained in the Scriptures. And this is that which all other means are designed to render useful. Now by this *reading* I understand that which is *staid, sedate, considerative,* with respect unto the end aimed at; *reading* attended with a due consideration of the things *read;* inquiry into them, meditation on them, with a regard unto the design and scope of the place, with all other advantages for the due investigation of the truth.

Frequent reading of the word more generally and cursorily, whereunto all Christians ought to be trained from their youth (2 Tim. iii. 15.), and which all closets and families should be acquainted withal (Deut. vi. 6—9.), is of great use and advantage; and I shall, therefore, name some particular benefits which may be received thereby.

1. Hereby the minds of men are brought into a *general acquaintance* with the nature and design of the *book of God,* which some to their present shame, and future ruin, are prodigiously ignorant of.

2. They who are exercised herein, come to know *distinctly* what things are treated of in the *particular books* and passages of it; whilst others who live in a *neglect of this duty,* scarce know what books are *historical,* what *prophetical,* or what *doctrinal,* in the whole Bible.

3. Hereby they exercise themselves unto *thoughts of heavenly things,* and a holy converse with God; if they bring along with them as they ought, hearts *humble* and sensible of his authority in the word.

4. Their minds are insensibly furnished with *due conceptions about God, spiritual things, themselves,* and *their conditions;* and their memories with expressions proper and meet to be used about them in prayer or otherwise.

5. God oftentimes takes occasion herein, to *influence their souls* with the efficacy of divine truth in particular, in the way of *exhortation, reproof, instruction,* or *consolation,* whereof all who attend diligently unto this duty, have experience.

6. They come by *reason of use* to have their *senses exercised* to discern good and evil, so that if any noxious or corrupt sense of any place of the Scripture be suggested unto them, they have in readiness wherewith to oppose it, from other places from whence they are instructed in the truth.

And many other advantages there are which men may reap from the *constant reading* of the Scripture, which I therefore reckon as a *general means* of coming to the knowledge of the mind of God therein. But this is not that which at present I especially intend. Wherefore,

By this *reading* of the Scripture, I mean the studying of it in the use of means to come to a due understanding of it in particular places. For it is about the means of the *solemn interpretation* of the Scripture that we now inquire. Hereunto, I say, the general study of the whole, and in particular the places to be interpreted is required. It may seem altogether needless and impertinent to give this direction, for the understanding of the mind of God in the Scripture, namely, that we should read and study it to that end. For who can imagine how it should be done otherwise. But I wish the practice of many, it may be, of the most, did not render this direction necessary. For in their design to come to the knowledge of spiritual things, the direct immediate study of the Scripture, is that which they least of all apply themselves unto. Other *writings* they will read and study with diligence. But their reading of the Scripture is for the most part superficial, without that intension of mind and spirit, that use and application of means which are necessary unto the understanding of it, as the event doth manifest. It is the immediate study of the Scripture that I intend. And hereunto I do refer: (1.) A due consideration of the *analogy of faith* always to be retained. (2.) A due *examination* of the design and *scope of the place*. (3.) A diligent observation of *antecedents* and *consequents*, with all those general rules which are usually given as directions in the interpretation of the Scripture. This, therefore, in the diligent exercise of our minds and reasons is the first general outward means of knowing the mind of God in the Scripture, and the interpretation thereof.

II. The means designed for the improvement hereof, or our profitable use of it, are of three sorts. i. *Spiritual*. ii. *Disciplinary*. iii. *Ecclesiastical*. Some instances on each head will farther clear what I intend.

1. The first thing required, as a *spiritual means*, is *prayer*. I intend *fervent and earnest prayer* for the assistance of the Spirit of God, revealing the mind of God as inthe whole

Scripture, so in particular books and passages of it. I have proved before that this is both enjoined and commanded unto us by the practice of the *prophets* and *apostles*. And this also by the way invincibly proves, that the due investigation of the mind of God in the Scripture, is a work above the utmost improvement of natural reason, with all outward advantages whatsoever. For were we sufficient of ourselves, without immediate divine aid and assistance for this work, why do we pray for them? with which argument the ancient church perpetually urged the *Pelagians*, as to the necessity of saving grace. And it may be justly supposed that no man who professeth himself a Christian, can be so forsaken of all sobriety, as once to question whether this be the *duty of every one* who hath either desire or design to attain any real knowledge of the will of God in the Scripture. But the practical neglect of this duty is the true reason why so many that are skilful enough in the *disciplinary means of knowledge* are yet such strangers to the true knowledge of the mind of God. And this prayer is of two sorts.

(1.) That which respects the *teaching of the Spirit* in general, whereby we labour in our prayers, *that he would enlighten our minds, and lead us into the knowledge of the truth*, according to the work before described. The *importance of this grace* unto our faith and obedience, the *multiplied promises* of God concerning it, our necessity of it from our natural weakness, ignorance, and darkness, should render it a principal part of our daily supplications. Especially is this incumbent on them who are called in an especial manner to *search the Scriptures*, and to declare the mind of God in them unto others. And great are the advantages which a conscientious discharge of this duty, with a due reverence of God, brings along with it. Prejudices, preconceived opinions, engagements by secular advantages, false confidences, authority of men, influences from parties and societies, will be all laid level before it, at least, be gradually exterminated out of the minds of men thereby. And how much the casting out of all this *old leaven* tends to prepare the mind for, and to give it a due understanding of, divine revelations, hath been proved before. I no way doubt, but that the rise and continuance of all those *enormous errors* which so infest Christian religion, and which many seek so sedulously to confirm

from the Scripture itself, are in a great measure to be ascribed unto the corrupt affections with the power of tradition, and influences of secular advantages, which cannot firm their station in the minds of them who are constant sincere suppliants at the throne of grace to be taught of God what is his mind and will in his word. For it includes a *prevailing resolution* sincerely to receive what we are so instructed in, whatever effects it may have upon the inward or outward man. And this is the only way to preserve our souls under the influences of divine teachings, and the irradiation of the Holy Spirit, without which we can neither learn, nor know any thing as we ought. I suppose, therefore, this may be fixed on as a *common principle of Christianity;* namely, that constant and fervent prayer for the divine assistance of the Holy Spirit, is such an indispensable means for the attaining the knowledge of the mind of God in the Scripture, as that without it all others will not be available.

Nor do I believe that any one who doth, and can thus pray as he ought, in a conscientious study of the word, shall ever be left unto the *final prevalency* of any pernicious error; or the ignorance of any fundamental truth. None utterly miscarry in the seeking after the mind of God, but those who are perverted by their own corrupt minds. Whatever appearance there be of sincerity and diligence in seeking after truth, if men miscarry therein, it is far more safe to judge, that they do so, either through the neglect of this duty, or indulgence unto some corruption of their hearts and minds, than that God is wanting to reveal himself unto those that diligently seek him. And there are unfailing grounds of this assurance. For, [1.] faith exercised in this duty will work out all that *filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness,* which would hinder us so to receive the ingrafted word with meekness, as that it should save our souls. [2.] It will work in the mind those gracious qualifications of *humility and meekness,* whereunto the teachings of God are promised in an especial manner, as we have shewed. And, [3.] our Saviour hath assured us, that his *heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him.* Luke xi. 13. Neither is any supplication for the Holy Spirit more acceptable unto God, than that which designs the knowledge of his mind and will that we may do them. [4.] All those *graces* which render

the mind *teachable, and meet unto the reception of heavenly truths,* are kept up unto a due exercise therein. If we deceive not ourselves in these things, we cannot be deceived. For, in the discharge of this duty those things are learned in their *power,* whereof we have the *notion* only in other means of instruction. And hereby whatever we learn, is so fixed upon our minds, possesseth them with such power, transforming them into the likeness of it, as that they are prepared for the communication of farther light, and increases in the degrees of knowledge.

Nor can it be granted on the other hand, that any sacred truth is learned in a *due manner,* whatever diligence be used in its acquisition; or that we can know the mind of God in the Scripture in any thing as we ought, when the management of all other means which we make use of unto that end, is not committed unto the hand of this duty. The apostle desiring earnestly that those unto whom he wrote, and whom he instructed in the mysteries of the gospel, might have a due *spiritual understanding* of the mind of God, as revealed and taught in them, prays with all fervency of mind, that they might have a 'communication of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation from above' to enable them thereunto; Eph. i. 17—19. iii. 14—17. For without this he knew it could not be attained. That which he did for them, we are obliged to do for *ourselves.* And where this is neglected, especially considering that the *supplies of the Spirit* unto this purpose are confined unto them that *ask* him, there is no ground of expectation, that any one should ever learn the saving knowledge of the mind of God in a due manner.

I shall, therefore, fix this assertion as a sacred truth. *Whoever in the diligent and immediate study of the Scripture to know the mind of God therein so as to do it, doth abide in fervent supplications in and by Jesus Christ for supplies of the Spirit of grace, to lead him into all truth, to reveal and make known unto him the truth as it is in Jesus, to give him an understanding of the Scriptures, and the will of God therein, he shall be preserved from pernicious errors, and attain that degree in knowledge, as shall be sufficient unto the guidance and preservation of the life of God, in the whole of his faith and obedience.* And more security of truth there is herein, than in men's giving themselves up unto any other conduct in this world whatever.

The goodness of God, his faithfulness in being the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, the command of this duty unto this end, the promises annexed unto it, with the whole nature of religion, do give us the highest security herein. And although these *duties* cannot but be accompanied with a conscientious care and fear of errors and mistakes, yet the *persons* that are found in them, have no ground of troublesome thoughts or fearful suspicions, that they shall be deceived or fail in the end they aim at.

(2.) Prayer respects *particular occasions*, or especial places of Scripture, whose exposition or interpretation we inquire after. This is the great duty of a *faithful interpreter*, that which in, with, and after, the use of all means, he betakes himself unto. An experience of divine guidance and assistance herein, is that which unto some is invaluable; however by others it be despised. But shall we think it strange for a Christian, when it may be after the use of all other means, he finds himself at a loss about the true meaning and intention of the Holy Spirit in any place or text of Scripture, to betake himself in a more than ordinary manner unto God by *prayer*, that he would by his Spirit enlighten, guide, teach, and so reveal the truth unto him: or should we think it strange that God should hear such prayers, and instruct such persons in the *secrets of his covenant?* God forbid there should be such *atheistical* thoughts in the minds of any, who would be esteemed Christians. Yea, I must say, that for a man to undertake the interpretation of any part or portion of Scripture in a solemn manner, without *invocation of God* to be taught and instructed by his Spirit, is a high provocation of him. Nor shall I expect the discovery of truth from any one who so proudly and ignorantly engageth in a work so much above his ability to manage. I speak this of solemn and stated interpretations; for otherwise a 'scribe ready furnished for the kingdom of God,' may, as he hath occasion, from the spiritual light and understanding wherewith he is endued, and the stores he hath already received, declare the mind of God unto the edification of others. But this is the first means to render our *studying of the Scripture* useful and effectual unto the end aimed at.

This, as was said, is the *sheet anchor* of a faithful expositor of the Scripture, which he betakes himself unto in all

difficulties. Nor can he without it be led into a comfortable satisfaction, that he hath attained the mind of the Holy Ghost in any divine revelation. When all other helps fail, as he shall in most places find them to do, if he be really intent on the disquisition of truth, this will yield him his best relief. And so long as this is attended unto, we need not fear farther useful interpretations of the Scripture, or the several parts of it, than as yet have been attained unto by the endeavours of others. For the stores of truth laid up in it are inexhaustible. And hereby will they be opened unto those that inquire into them with humility and diligence. The labours of those who have gone before us are of excellent use herein. But they are yet very far from having discovered the *depths* of this vein of wisdom. Nor will the best of our endeavours prescribe limits and bounds to them that shall come after us. And the reason why the *generality of expositors* go in the same track one after another, seldom passing beyond the beaten path of former endeavours, unless it be in some excursions of curiosity, is the want of giving up themselves unto the conduct of the Holy Spirit in the diligent performance of this duty.

2. *Readiness to receive impressions from divine truths as revealed unto us,* conforming our minds and hearts unto the doctrine made known, is another means unto the same end. This is the first end of all divine revelations, of all heavenly truths, namely, to beget the image and likeness of themselves in the minds of men; Rom. vi. 17. 2 Cor. iii. 18. And we miss our aim if this be not the first thing we intend in the study of the Scripture. It is not to learn *the form of the doctrine of godliness,* but to get the *power* of it implanted in our souls. And this is an eminent means of our making a progress in the knowledge of the truth. To seek after mere *notions of truth,* without an endeavour after an *experience of its power* in our hearts, is not the way to increase our understanding in spiritual things. He alone is in a posture to learn from God, who sincerely gives up his mind, conscience, and affections to the power and rule of what is revealed unto him. Men may have in their study of the Scripture other ends also, as the profit and edification of others. *But if this conforming of their own souls unto the power of the word,* be not fixed in the first place in their minds, they do not *strive law-*

fully, nor will be crowned. And if at any time when we study the word, we have not this design expressly in our minds, yet if upon the discovery of any truth, we endeavour not to have the likeness of it in our own hearts, we lose our principal advantage by it.

3. *Practical obedience in the course of our walking before God,* is another means unto the same end. The gospel is the 'truth which is according unto godliness;' Tit. i. 1. And it will not long abide with any who follow not after godliness according unto its guidance and direction. Hence we see so many to lose that very understanding which they had of the doctrines of it, when once they begin to give up themselves to ungodly lives. The true notion of *holy evangelical truths* will not *live,* at least not *flourish,* where they are divided from a holy conversation. As we learn all to practise, so we learn much by practice. There is no *practical science* which we can make any great improvements of, without an assiduous practice of its *theorems.* Much less is *wisdom,* such as is the understanding of the mysteries of the Scripture, to be increased, unless a man be *practically conversant* about the things which it directs unto.

And herein alone we can come unto the *assurance,* that what we know and learn is indeed the truth. So our Saviour tells us, 'That if any man do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God;' John vii. 17. Whilst men learn the truth only in the notion of it, whatever conviction of its being so it is accompanied withal, they will never attain *stability* in their minds concerning it, nor come to the *full assurance of understanding,* unless they continually exemplify it in their own obedience, doing the will of God. This is that which will give them a satisfactory persuasion of it. And hereby will they be led continually into farther degrees of knowledge. For the mind of man is capable of receiving *continual supplies* in the increase of light and knowledge whilst it is in this world, if so be they are improved unto their proper end in obedience unto God. But without this the mind will be quickly stuffed with notions, so that no streams can descend into it from the fountain of truth.

4. *A constant design for growth, and a progress in knowledge, out of love to the truth, and experience of its excellency,* is use-

ful, yea, needful unto the right understanding of the mind of God in the Scriptures. Some are quickly apt to think, that they know *enough*, as much as is needful for them; some that they know *all* that is to be known, or have a sufficient comprehension of all the counsels of God as revealed in the Scripture, or as they rather judge, of the whole *body of divinity* in all the parts of it, which they may have disposed into an exact method with great accuracy and skill. No great or useful discoveries of the mind of God shall I expect from such persons. Another frame of heart and spirit is required in them who design to be instructed in the mind of God, or to learn it in the study of the Scripture. Such persons look upon it as a treasury of divine truths absolutely unfathomable by any created understandings. The truths which they do receive from thence, and comprehend according to their measure therein, they judge *amiable, excellent, and desirable* above all earthly things. For they find the fruit, benefit, and advantage of them, in strengthening the life of God in them, conforming their souls unto him, communicating of his light, love, grace, and power unto them.

This makes them with purpose of heart continually to press in the use of all means to *increase in this wisdom, to grow in the knowledge of God and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* They are pressing on continually unto that measure of perfection which in this life is attainable. And every new beam of truth whereby their minds are enlightened, guides them into fresh discoveries of it. This frame of mind is under a promise of divine teachings, Hos. vi. 3. 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.' 'If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God;' Prov. ii. 3—6. When men live in a holy admiration of, and complacency in, God, as the God of truth, as the first infinite essential truth, in whose enjoyment alone there is fulness of all satisfactory light and knowledge; when they adore the fulness of those revelations of himself which with infinite wisdom he hath treasured up in the Scriptures; when they find by experience an excellency, power, and efficacy, in what they have attained unto; and out of a deep sense of the smallness of their measures,

of the meanness of their attainments, and how little a portion it is they know of God; do live in a constant design to abide with faith and patience in continual study of the word, and inquiries into the mind of God therein, *they are in the way of* being taught by him, and learning of his mind, unto all the proper ends of its revelation.

5. There are sundry *ordinances of spiritual worship* which God hath ordained as a means of our illumination: a religious attendance whereunto is required of them who intend to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And this is the first head of means for the due improvement of our endeavours, in reading and studying of the Scriptures, that we may come thereby unto a right understanding of the mind of God in them, and be able to interpret them unto the use and benefit of others. What is the work of the *Holy Spirit* herein, what is the aid and assistance which he contributes hereunto, is so manifest from what we have discoursed, especially concerning his operations in us as a Spirit of grace and supplication (not yet made public), that it must not be here insisted on.

It may be these means will be despised by some, and the proposal of them to this end looked on as weak and ridiculous, if not extremely *fanciful*. For it is supposed that these things are pressed to no other end but to decry *learning*, *study*, and the use of reason in the interpretation of the Scriptures, which will quickly reduce all religion into *enthusiasm*. Whether there be any thing of truth in this suggestion shall be immediately discovered. Nor have those by whom these things are pressed the least reason to decline the use of *learning*, or any rational means in their proper place, as though they were conscious to themselves of a deficiency in them with respect unto those by whom they are so highly, and indeed for the most part *vainly*, pretended unto.

But in the matter in hand we must deal with some confidence. They by whom these things are *decried*, by whom they are *denied* to be necessary means for the right understanding of the mind of God in the Scriptures, do plainly renounce the chief principles of Christian religion. For, although the Scripture hath many things in *common* with other writings wherein *secular arts and sciences* are declared, yet to

suppose that we may attain the sense and mind of God in them, by the mere use of such *ways and means* as we apply in the investigation of truths of other natures, is to exclude all consideration of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of the end of the Scriptures themselves, of the nature and use of the things delivered in them, and by consequent to overthrow all religion; see Prov. xxviii. 5.

And this first sort of *means* which we have hitherto insisted on, are *duties* in themselves as well as means unto farther ends. And *all duties* under the gospel are the ways and means wherein, and whereby, the graces of God are exercised. For, as no *grace* can be exerted or exercised, but in a way of duty, so no duty is *evangelical,* or accepted with God, but what especial grace is exercised in. As the word is the rule whereby they are guided, directed, and measured; so the *acting of grace in them,* is that whereby they are quickened, without which the best duties are but dead works. *Materially* they are duties, but *formally* they are sins. In their performance, therefore, as gospel duties, and as they are accepted with God, there is an especial aid and assistance of the Holy Spirit. And on that account there is so in the *interpretation* of the Scriptures. For if without his assistance we cannot make use aright of the means of interpreting of the Scripture, we cannot interpret the Scripture without it. The truth is, they who shall either say, that these duties are not necessarily required unto them who would *search the Scripture,* and find out the mind of God for their own edification, or so as to expound those oracles of God unto others; or that they may be performed in a manner acceptable unto God, and usefully unto this end, without the especial assistance of the Holy Spirit, do *impiously* what lies in them evert the whole doctrine of the gospel, and the grace thereof.

That which, in the next place, might be insisted on, is the consideration of the *especial rules* which have been or may yet be given for the right interpretation of the Scriptures. Such are they which concern *the style* of the Scripture, its especial *phraseology,* the *tropes* and *figures* it makes use of, the *way* of its arguing, the *times* and seasons wherein it was written, or the several parts of it; the *occasions* under the

guidance of the Spirit of God given thereunto; the *design* and scope of *particular writers*, with what is peculiar unto them in their manner of writing; the *comparing of several places*, as to their difference in things and expressions, the reconciliation of seeming contradictions, with other things of an alike nature. But as the most of these may be reduced unto what hath been spoken before, about the *disposal and perspicuity* of the Scripture, so they have been already handled by many others at large, and therefore I shall not here insist upon them, but speak only unto the general means that are to be applied unto the same end.

CHAP. VIII.

The second sort of means for the interpretation of the Scripture, which are disciplinarian.

THE second sort of means I call *disciplinarian*, as consisting in the due use and improvement of *common arts and sciences*, applied unto, and made use of in, the study of the Scriptures. And these are things which have no *moral good* in themselves, but being indifferent in their own nature, their end, with the manner of their management thereunto, is the only measure and standard of their worth and value. Hence it is, that in the application of them unto the *interpretation of the Scripture*, they may be *used aright*, and in a due manner, and they may be *abused* to the great disadvantage of those who use them; and accordingly it hath fallen out. In the first way they receive a *blessing* from the Spirit of God, who alone prospereth every good and honest endeavour in any kind; and in the latter they are efficacious to *seduce* men unto a trust in their own understandings, which in other things is foolish, and in these things pernicious.

1. That which of this sort I prefer, in the first place, is the *knowledge of, and skill in, the languages wherein the Scripture was originally written*. For the very words of them therein, were peculiarly from the Holy Ghost, which gives them to be דברי אמת *words of truth*, and the Scripture itself to

be כתובה ישר, a right, or upright, or perfect writing; Eccles. xii. 10. The Scriptures of the Old Testament were given unto the church whilst it was entirely confined unto one nation; Psal. cxlvii. 19. Thence they were all written in that language, which was common among, and peculiar unto, that nation. And this language, as the people itself, was called Hebrew, from Heber the son of Salah, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, their most eminent progenitor; Gen. x. 23, 24. For being the one original tongue of mankind, it remained in some part of his family, who probably joined not in the *great apostacy* of the world from God, nor was concerned in their dispersion at the building of Babel, which ensued thereon. The derivation of that name from another *original*, is a fruit of curiosity and vain conjecture, as I have elsewhere demonstrated.

In process of time that people were carried into *captivity* out of their own land, and were thereby forced to learn, and use a language somewhat different from their own; another absolutely it was not, yet so far did it differ from it, that those who knew and spoke the one, commonly could not understand the other; 2 Kings xviii. 26. This was לשון כסדים, Dan. i. 4. 'The language of the Chaldeans,' which Daniel and others learned. But by the people's long continuance in that country it became common to them all. After this some parts of the books of the Scripture, as of Daniel and Ezra, were written in that language, as also *one* verse in the prophecy of Jeremiah, when they were ready to be carried thither, in which he instructs the people how to reproach the idols of the nations in their own language; Jer. x. 11. The design of God was that his word should be always read and used in that language, which was commonly understood by them unto whom he granted the privilege thereof, nor could any of the ends of his wisdom and goodness in that merciful grant be otherwise attained.

The prodigious conceit of *keeping the Scripture*, which is the foundation, rule, and guide of the whole church, the spiritual food and means of life unto all the members of it, by the *church*, or those who pretend themselves intrusted with the power and rights of it, in a *language unknown* unto the community of the people, had not then befallen the minds of men, no more than it hath yet any countenance given unto

it, by the authority of God, or reason of mankind. And indeed the advancement and defence of this imagination, is one of those things which sets me at liberty from being influenced by the *authority* of any sort of men in matters of religion. For what will not their confidence undertake to vent, and their *sophistical* ability give countenance unto, or wrangle about, which their interest requires and calls for at their hands; who can openly plead and contend for the truth of such an absurd and irrational assertion, as is contrary to all that we know of God and his will, to all that we understand of ourselves or our duty, with respect thereunto.

When the New Testament was to be written, the church was to be diffused throughout the world, amongst people of all tongues and languages under heaven: yet there was a necessity that it should be written in *some one certain language*, wherein the sacred truth of it might, as in original records, be safely laid up and deposited. It was left, as καλὴ παραθήκη, ἱερὰ παρακαταθήκη, a good and sacred *depositum* unto the ministry of the church to be kept inviolate, by the Holy Ghost; 1 Tim. vi. 20. 2 Tim. i. 14. And it was disposed into writing in *one certain language*, wherein the preservation of it in purity, was committed to the ministry of all ages; not absolutely, but under his care and inspection. From this *one language* God had ordained, that it should be derived by the care of the ministry unto the knowledge and use of all nations and people. And this was represented by the *miraculous gift of tongues* communicated by the Holy Ghost unto the first designed publishers of the gospel. In this case it pleased the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, to make use of the Greek language, wherein he writ the whole New Testament originally. For the report, that the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistle to the Hebrews, were first written in Hebrew, is altogether groundless, and I have elsewhere disproved it.

Now this language at that season, through all sorts of advantages, was diffused throughout the world, especially in those parts of it where God had designed to fix the first and principal station of the church. For the eastern parts of the world, it was long before carried into them, and its use imposed on them by the Macedonian arms and laws, with the establishment of the Grecian empire for sundry ages

among them. And somewhile before in the western parts of the world, the same language was greatly inquired into, and generally received, on the account of the *wisdom* and *learning* which was treasured up therein, in the writings of poets, philosophers, and historians, which had newly received a peculiar advancement.

For two things fell out in the providence of God about that season, which greatly conduced unto the furtherance of the gospel. The Jews were wholly possessed of whatever was *true* in religion, and which lay in a direct subserviency unto the gospel itself. This they gloried in, and boasted of, as a privilege which they enjoyed above all the world. The Grecians on the other hand, were possessed of skill and wisdom in all arts and sciences, with the products of *philosophical inquiries*, and elegancy of speech in expressing the conceptions of their minds. And this they gloried in and boasted of, above all other people in the world. Now both these nations being dispossessed of their empire, sovereignty, and liberty at home, by the Romans, multitudes of them made it their business to disperse themselves in the world, and to seek, as it were, a new empire, the one to its religion, and the other to its language, arts, and sciences. Of both sorts with their design, the Roman writers in those days do take notice, and greatly complain. And these privileges being boasted of, and rested in, proved equally prejudicial to both nations, as to the *reception of the gospel*, as our apostle disputes at large, 1 Cor. i. ii. But through the wisdom of God disposing and ordering all things unto his own glory, the design and actings of them both became an effectual means to *facilitate* the propagation of the gospel. For the Jews having planted synagogues in most nations and principal cities in the Roman empire, they had both leavened multitudes of people with some knowledge of the true God, which prepared the way of the gospel; as also they had gathered *fixed assemblies*, which the preachers of the gospel constantly took the advantage of, to enter upon their work, and to begin the declaration of their message. The Grecians, on the other hand, had so universally diffused the knowledge of their language, as the use of that one tongue alone was sufficient to instruct all sorts of people throughout the world, in the knowledge of the truth. For the *gift of tongues* was only

to be a 'sign unto believers;' 1 Cor. xiv. and not a means of preaching the gospel constantly in a language which he understood not who spake.

In this language, therefore, as the most common, diffusive, and generally understood in the world, did God order that the books of the New Testament should be written. From thence, by translations and expositions, was it to be derived into other tongues and languages. For the design of God was still the same, that his word should be declared unto the church, in a language *which* it understood. Hence is that peculiar distribution of the nations of the world, into Jews, Greeks, Barbarians, and Scythians; not accommodated unto the use of those terms in Grecian writers, unto whom the Jews were no less barbarians than the Scythians themselves; Col. iii. 11. But as the Scriptures of the Old Testament were peculiarly given unto the Jews, so were those of the New unto the Greeks, that is, those who made use of their language; from whence it was deduced unto all other nations, called Barbarians and Scythians.

It must be acknowledged that the Scripture, as written in these languages, is accompanied with many and great advantages. 1. In them peculiarly is it γραφὴ θεόπνευστος, a 'writing by divine inspiration;' 2 Tim. iii. 16. And ספר יהוה the 'book of writing of the Lord;' Isa. xxxiv. 16. With a singular privilege above all translations. Hence the very words themselves as therein used and placed are *sacred, consecrated by God,* unto that holy use. The *sacred sense* indeed of the words and expression is the *internum formale sacrum,* or that wherein the holiness of the Scripture doth consist. But the *writing itself* in the original languages, in the words chosen and used by the Holy Ghost, is the *externum formale,* of the Holy Scripture, and is *materially sacred.*

It is the sense, therefore, of the Scripture which principally, and for its own sake, we inquire after and into; that divine sense which, as Justin Martyr speaks, is ὕπερ λόγον, ὕπερ νουν, καὶ ὕπερ πᾶσαν κατάληψιν; absolutely above our natural reason, understanding, and comprehension. In the *words* we are concerned with respect thereunto, as by the wisdom of the Holy Ghost they are designed as the written signs thereof.

(2.) The *words of the Scripture* being given thus immedi-

ately from God, every apex, tittle, or iota, in the whole, is considerable, as that which is an effect of divine wisdom, and therefore filled with sacred truth according to their place and measure. Hence they are all under the especial care of God, according to that promise of our Saviour, Matt. v. 18. Verily I say unto you, ἕως ἂν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ ἰῶτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπο τοῦ νόμου. 'Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law.' That our Saviour doth here intend the *writing of the Scriptures* then in use in the church, and assure the protection of God unto the least letter, vowel, or point of it, I have proved elsewhere. And himself, in due time, will reprove the profane boldness of them, who without evidence or sufficient proof, without that respect and reverence which is due unto the interest, care, providence, and faithfulness of God in this matter, do assert *manifold changes* to have been made in the original writings of the Scripture.

But, as I said, divine senses, and singular mysteries may be couched in the use and disposal of a *letter*. And this God himself hath manifested, as in sundry other instances, so in the change of the names of Abram and Sarai, wherein the addition or alteration of one letter carried along with it a mysterious signification for the use of the church in all ages. In translations nothing of that nature can be observed. And hence a due consideration of the very *accents* in the original of the Old Testament, as *distinctive* or *conjunctive*, is a singular advantage in the investigation of the sense of particular places and sentences.

(3.) There is in the originals of the Scripture a peculiar *emphasis* of words and expressions, and in them an especial *energy*, to intimate and insinuate the sense of the Holy Ghost unto the minds of men, which cannot be traduced into other languages by translations, so as to obtain the same power and efficacy. Now this is not absolutely from the nature of the *original languages* themselves, especially not of the Greek, whose principal advantages and excellencies, in *copiousness* and *elegancy*, are little used in the New Testament; but from a secret impression of *divine wisdom* and efficacy accompanying the immediate delivery of the mind of God in them. There is, therefore, no small advantage hence to be obtained in the interpretation of the Scripture. For when we have

received an impression on our minds of the sense and intention of the Holy Ghost in any particular place, we shall seek for meet words to express it by, wherein consists the whole work of Scripture exposition, so far as I have any acquaintance with it. 'Interpretis officium est, non quid ipse velit, sed quid sentiat ille quem interpretatur, exponere.' Hieron. Apol. Adv. Ruffin. For when the mind is really affected with the discovery of truth itself, it will be guided and directed in the declaration of it unto others.

(4.) The whole course of speech, especially in the New Testament is accommodated unto the nature, use, and propriety of that language, as expressed in other authors, who wrote therein, and had a perfect understanding of it. From them, therefore, is the proper use and sense of the words, phrases, and expressions in the New Testament much to be learned. This no man can make a judgment of in a due manner, but he that is *skilled* in that language, as used and delivered by them: not that I think a *commentary* on the New Testament may be collected out of Eustathius, Hesychius, Phavorinus, Julius Pollux, and other glossaries, from whose *grammaticisms* and *vocabularies*, some do countenance themselves in curious and bold conjectures; nor from the likeness of expressions in *classic* authors; this only I say, that it is of singular advantage in the interpretation of the Scripture, that a man be well acquainted with the *original languages*, and be able to examine the use and signification of words, phrases, and expressions, as they are applied and declared in other authors. And even to the understanding of the Greek of the New Testament, it is necessary that a man have an acquaintance with the Hebrew of the Old. For although I do not judge that there are such a number of *Hebraisms* in it, in a supposed discovery whereof consists no small part of some men's *critical observations;* so I readily grant that there is such a *cognation* and *alliance* in and between the senses of the one and the other, as that a due comparing of their expressions, doth mutually contribute light and perspicuity unto them.

By these things great advantage may be obtained unto the right understanding of the sense of the Scripture, or the mind of the Holy Ghost therein. For there is no other sense in it than what is contained in the words, whereof

materially it doth consist, though really that sense itself be such as our minds cannot receive without the especial divine assistance before pleaded. And in the interpretation of the mind of any one, it is necessary that the *words* he speaks or writes be rightly understood. And this we cannot do immediately unless we understand the *language* wherein he speaks, as also the *idiotisms* of that language, with the common use and intention of its *phraseology* and expressions. And if we do not hereby come unto a perfect comprehension of the sense intended, because many other things are required thereunto, yet a hinderance is removed, without which we cannot do so; occasions of manifest mistakes are taken away, and the cabinet is as it were unlocked, wherein the jewel of truth lies hid, which with a lawful diligent search may be found. And what perplexities, mistakes, and errors, the ignorance of these *original languages* hath cast many expositors into, both of old and of late, especially among those who pertinaciously adhere unto *one translation*, and that none of the best, might be manifested by instances undeniable and that without number. Such is that of the gloss on Tit. iii. 10. 'Hæreticum hominem de vita;' which adds, as its exposition, 'tolle.' And those among ourselves who are less skilled in this knowledge, are to be advised, that they would be careful not to adventure on any *singular exposition of the Scriptures*, or any *text* in them, upon the credit of any one or all translations they can make use of, seeing persons of greater name and worth than to be mentioned unto their disreputation, have miscarried upon the same account. A reverential subjection of mind, and diligent attendance unto the *analogy of faith*, is their best preservative in this matter. And I fear not to add, that a *superficial knowledge in these tongues*, which many aim at, is of little use, unless it be to make men *adventurous* in betraying their own ignorance. But the sense and substance of the Scripture being contained entirely in every *good translation* (amongst which that in use among ourselves is *excellent*, though capable of great improvements), men may by the use of the means before directed unto, and under the conduct of the teaching of the Spirit of God in them, usefully and rightly expound the Scripture in general, unto the edification of others, whereof many instances may be given amongst ancient and modern expositors.

This *skill and knowledge*, therefore, is of great use unto them who are called unto the interpretation of the Scripture. And the church of God hath had no small advantage by the endeavours of men *learned* herein, who have exercised it in the exposition of the words and *phraseology* of the Scriptures, as compared with their use in other authors. But yet, as was before observed, this skill and the exercise of it, in the way mentioned, is no *duty* in itself, nor enjoined unto any for its own sake, but only hath a *goodness* in it with respect unto a certain end. Wherefore, it is in its own nature *indifferent*, and in its utmost improvement capable of *abuse;* and such in late days it hath fallen under, unto a great extremity. For the study of the *original languages*, and the exercise of skill in them, in the interpretation of the Scripture, hath been of great reputation and that deservedly. Hence multitudes of learned men have engaged themselves in that work and study, and the number of *annotations* and *comments* on the Scripture consisting principally in *critical observations* as they are called, have been greatly increased. And they are utter strangers unto these things, who will not allow that many of them are of singular use. But withal, this skill and faculty where it hath been unaccompanied with that humility, sobriety, reverence of the author of the Scripture, and respect unto the *analogy of faith*, which ought to bear sway in the minds of all men who undertake to expound the oracles of God, may be, and hath been, greatly abused unto the hurt of its owners, and disadvantage of the church.

For, [1.] by some it hath been turned into the fuel of pride, and a noisome elation of mind. Yea, experience shews, that this kind of knowledge where it is supposed signal, is of all others the most apt to puff up and swell the vain minds of men, unless it be where it is allayed with a singular modesty of nature, or the mind itself be sufficiently corrected and changed by grace. Hence the expressions of pride and self-conceit which some have broken forth into on an imagination of their skill and faculty in criticising on the Scriptures, have been ridiculous and impious. The Holy Ghost usually teacheth not such persons, neither should I expect to learn much from them relating unto the truth as it is in Jesus. But yet the stones they dig may be made use of by a skilful builder.

[2.] In many it hath been accompanied with a noxious *profane curiosity*. Every tittle and apex shall give them occasion for *fruitless conjectures*, as vain, for the most part, as those of the *cabalistical* Jews. And this humour hath filled us with *needless* and *futilous* observations, which, beyond an ostentation of the learning of their authors (indeed the utmost end whereunto they are designed) are of no use nor consideration. But this is not all; some men from hence have been prompted unto a boldness in adventuring to *corrupt the text* itself, or the plain sense of it. For what else is done when men for an ostentation of their skill, will produce quotations out of *learned authors*, to illustrate or expound sayings in the Scripture, wherein there seems to be some kind of compliance in words and sounds, when their senses are adverse and contrary? Amongst a thousand instances which might be given to exemplify this folly and confidence, we need take that one alone of him, who to explain or illustrate that saying of Hezekiah, 'Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken: he said, moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days;' Isa. xxxix. 8. subjoins, ἐμοῦ θανόντος γαῖα μιχθήτω πυρὶ. So comparing that holy man's submission and satisfaction in the peace of the church with truth, and the *blasphemous imprecation* of an impious wretch for confusion on the world, when once he should be got out of it. And such notable sayings are many of our *late critics* farced withal.

And the confidence of some hath fallen into greater excesses, and hath swelled over these bounds also. To countenance their conjectures and self-pleasing imaginations, from whence they expect no small reputation for skill and learning, they fall in *upon the text* itself. As indeed we are come into an age wherein many seem to judge that they can neither sufficiently value themselves, nor obtain an estimation in the world, without some bold sallies of *curiosity* or *novelty* into the vitals of religion, with reflection of contempt and scorn on all that are otherwise minded, as persons incapable of comprehending their attainments. Hence it is that amongst ourselves we have scarce any thing left *unattacked* in the doctrine of the reformed churches, and of that in England as in former days; neither shall he be with many esteemed a man either of parts, learning, or judgment, who

hath not some *new curious opinion* or *speculation*, differing from what hath been formerly commonly taught and received, although the universality of these renowned notions among us, are but corrupt emanations from *Socinianism* or *Arminianism* on the one hand, or from *popery* on the other.

But it is men of another sort, and in truth of another manner of learning, than the present corrupters of the doctrines of the gospel (who, so far as I can perceive, trouble not themselves about the Scripture much one way or another), that we treat about. They are such as, in the exercise of the skill and ability under consideration, do fall in upon the Scripture itself, to make way for the advancement of their own conjectures, whereof *ten thousand* are not of the least importance, compared with the duty and necessity of preserving the sacred text inviolate, and the just and due persuasion that so it hath been preserved. For first, they command the *vowels and accents* of the Hebrew text out of their way, as things wherein they are not concerned, when the use of them in any one page of the Scripture, is *incomparably* of more worth and use, than all that they are or ever will be of, in the church of God. And this is done on slight *conjectures*. And if this suffice not to make way for their designs, then *letters and words* themselves must be corrected, upon an unproveable supposition, that the *original text hath been changed or corrupted*. And the boldness of some herein is grown intolerable, so that it is as likely means for the introduction and promotion of *atheism*, as any engine the devil hath set on work in these days wherein he is so openly engaged in that design.

There are also sundry other ways whereby this great help unto the understanding and interpretation of the Scripture, may be and hath been abused; those mentioned may suffice as instances confirming our observations. Wherefore, as *substantial* knowledge and skill in the *originals* is useful, and indeed necessary unto him that is called unto the exposition of the Scripture, so in the use and exercise of it sundry things ought to be well considered by them who are furnished therewithal. As, 1st. That the thing itself is *no grace*, nor any peculiar *gift* of the Holy Ghost, but a mere *fruit of diligence*, upon a common furniture with natural abilities. And nothing of this nature is in sacred things to be rested on, or

much trusted unto. 2ndly. That the *exercise of this skill* in and about the Scripture is not in itself as such an *especial or immediate duty*. Were it so, there would be *especial grace promised* to fill it up and quicken it. For all *gospel duties* are animated by grace in their due performance: that is, those who do so perform them have especial assistance in their so doing. But it is reduced unto the general head of duty with respect unto the end aimed at. Wherefore, 3rdly. the *blessing of God* on our endeavours, succeeding and prospering of them, as in other natural and civil occasions of life, is all that we expect herein from the Holy Spirit. And, 4thly. sundry other things are required of us, if we hope for this blessing on just grounds. It may be, some ignorant persons are so fond as to imagine that if they could understand the *original languages*, they must of necessity understand the sense of the Scripture. And there is nothing more frequent than for some, who either truly or falsely pretend a skill in them, to bear themselves high against those who perhaps are really more acquainted with the mind of the Holy Ghost in the word than themselves, as though *all things were plain and obvious unto them*, others knowing nothing but by them, or such as they are. But this is but one means of many that is useful to this purpose, and that such, as if it be alone, is of little or no use at all. It is fervent prayer, humility, lowliness of mind, godly fear and reverence of the word, and subjection of conscience unto the authority of every tittle of it, a constant attendance unto the *analogy* of faith, with due dependance on the Spirit of God for supplies of light and grace, which must make this or any other means of the same nature effectual.

2. An acquaintance with the *history and geography of the world*, and with *chronology*, I reckon also among *disciplinarian* aids in the interpretation of the Scripture. For as time is divided into what is past, and what is to come, so there are sundry things in the Scripture which in all seasons relate thereunto. For, (1.) God hath therein given us an account of the course and order of all things (which the Jews call סדר עלם), from the foundation of the world. And this he did for sundry important reasons, as incident with the general end of the Scripture. For hereby hath he secured the testimony that he hath given to his being, power, and

providence, by the *creation* and rule of all things. The evidences in them given thereunto, are those which are principally attacked by atheists. And although they do sufficiently manifest and evince their own testimony unto the common reason of mankind, yet sundry things relating unto them are so involved in darkness, and inextricable circumstances, as if all their concernments had not been plainly declared in the Scripture, the wisest of men had been at a great loss about them; and so were they always who wanted the light and advantage hereof. But here, as he hath plainly declared the *original emanation* of all things from his eternal power, so hath he testified unto his constant rule over all in all times, places, ages, and seasons, by instances incontrollable. Therein hath he treasured up all sorts of examples, with such impressions of his goodness, patience, power, wisdom, holiness, and righteousness upon them, as proclaim his almighty and righteous government of the whole universe. And, in the whole, he hath delivered unto us such a *tract and series of the ages of the world*, from its beginning, as *atheism* hath no tolerable pretence, from tradition, testimony, or the evidence of things themselves, to break in upon. Whatever is objected against the beginning of all things, and the course of their continuance in the world, delivered unto us in the Scripture, which is secured not only by the authority of divine revelation, but also by a universal evidence of all circumstances, is fond and ridiculous. I speak of the account given us in general, sufficient unto its own ends, and not of any men's *deductions* and applications of it unto minute portions of time, which probably it was not designed unto. It is sufficient unto its end, that its account, in general, which confounds all *atheistical* presumptions, is not to be impeached. And although the authority of the Scripture is not to be pleaded immediately against *atheists*, yet the matter and reason of it is, which from its own evidence renders all contrary pretensions contemptible.

(2.) God hath hereby given an account of the *beginning, progress, trials, faith, obedience*, and whole proceeding of the church in the pursuit of the first promise, unto the actual exhibition of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Hereunto were all things in a tendency for four thousand years. It is a glorious prospect we have therein, to see the call and foundation

of the church in the first promise given unto our common parents; what additions of light and knowledge he granted unto it successively by new revelations and promises; how he gradually adorned it with gifts, privileges, and ordinances; what ways and means he used to preserve it in faith, purity, and obedience; how he chastened, tried, punished, and delivered it; how he dealt with the nations of the world with respect unto it, raising them up for its affliction, and destroying them for their cruelty and oppression of it; what were the ways of wicked and sinful men amongst them, or in it, and what the graces and fruits of his saints, how by his power he retrieved it out of various calamities, and preserved it against all opposition unto its appointed season; all which, with innumerable other effects of divine wisdom and grace, are blessedly represented unto us therein.

Now besides that spiritual wisdom and insight into the great design of God in Christ, which is required unto a right understanding in these things, as they were types of better things to come, and examples of gospel mysteries; there is a skill and understanding in the records and monuments of time, the geographical respect of one nation unto another, the periods and revolutions of seasons and ages required, to apprehend them aright in their first literal instance and intention. And besides what is thus historically related in the Scripture, there are prophecies also of things to come in the church, and amongst the nations of the world, which are great evidences of its own divinity, and supporting arguments of our faith. But without some good apprehension of the *distinction of times, seasons,* and *places,* no man can rightly judge of their accomplishment.

Secondly, There are, in particular, prophecies in the Old Testament which reach unto the times of the gospel, upon the truth whereof the whole Scripture doth depend. Such are those concerning the *calling of the Gentiles,* the *rejection* and recovery of the Jews, the erection of the glorious kingdom of Christ in the world, with the oppositions that should be made unto it. And to these many are added in the New Testament itself; as Matt. xxiv. 25. 2 Thess. ii. 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. 2 Tim. iii. 1—3. iv. 3. But especially in the whole book of the Revelation, wherein the state of the church and of the world are foretold unto the consummation of all things. And how can

any man arrive unto a tolerable acquaintance with the *accomplishment of these prophecies* as to what is already past, or have a distinct grounded expectation of the fulfilling of what remains foretold, without a prospect into the state of things in the world, the revolutions of times past, with what fell out in them, which are the things spoken of? Those who treat of them without it, do but feign *chimeras* to themselves, as men in the dark are apt to do, or corrupt the word of God, by turning it into senseless and fulsome *allegories*. And those, on the other side, by whom these things are wholly *neglected*, do despise the wisdom and care of God towards the church, and disregard a blessed means of our faith and consolation.

Some things of this nature, especially such as relate unto *chronological computations*, I acknowledge are attended with great and apparently inextricable difficulties. But the skill and knowledge mentioned will guide humble and modest inquirers into so sufficient a satisfaction in general, and as unto all things which are really useful, that they shall have no temptation to question the verity of what in particular they cannot assoil. And it is an *intolerable pride and folly* where we are guided and satisfied infallibly in a thousand things, which we know no otherwise, to question the authority of the whole, because we cannot comprehend one or two particulars which perhaps were never intended to be reduced unto our measure. Besides, as the investigation of these things is attended with difficulties, so the ignorance of them or mistakes about them, whilst the minds of men are free from pertinacy and a spirit of contention, are of no great *disadvantage*. For they have very little influence on our faith and obedience, any otherwise than that we call not into question what is revealed. And it is most probable that the Scripture never intended to give us such *minute chronological determinations*, as some would deduce their computations unto, and that because not necessary. Hence we see that some who have laboured therein unto a *prodigy of industry* and learning, although they have made some useful discoveries, yet have never been able to give such evidence unto their *computations*, as that others would acquiesce in them; but by all their endeavours have administered occasion of *new strife* and contention, about things it may be of no great

importance to be known or determined. And, in general, men have run into two extremes in these things; for some pretend to frame an *exact computation* and *consent of times* from the Scripture alone, without any regard unto the records, monuments, histories, and *signatures* of times in the world. Wherever these appear in opposition or contradiction unto the *chain* and *links* of time which they have framed to themselves (as they suppose from the Scripture), they reject them as matters of no consideration. And it were well if they could do this unto satisfaction. But how evidently they have failed herein, as for instance in the computation of *Daniel's weeks*, wherein they will allow but four hundred and ninety years from the *first of Cyrus unto the death of our Saviour*, contrary to the common consent of mankind about things that fell out, and their continuance, between those seasons, taking up five hundred and sixty-two years, is manifest unto all. The Scripture, indeed, is to be made the only *sacred standard* and measure of things in its proper sense and understanding; nor is any thing to be esteemed of, which riseth up in contradiction thereunto. But as a due consideration of *foreign testimonies* and monuments doth oft-times give great light unto what is more generally or obscurely expressed in the Scripture; so where the Scripture in these things, with such allowances as it every where declares itself to admit of, may be interpreted in a fair compliance with *uncontrolled foreign testimonies*, that interpretation is to be embraced. The question is not, therefore, whether we shall regulate the computation of times by the Scripture, or histories and marks of time in the world; but whether, when the sense of the Scripture is *obscure* in those things, and its determination only general, so as to be equally capable of various senses, that (all other things being alike) is not to be preferred which agrees with the *undoubted monuments* of times in the nations of the world? For instance, the angel Gabriel acquaints Daniel that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, unto *Messiah the prince* and his cutting off, should be *seventy weeks* (to speak only of the whole number in general), that is, *four hundred and ninety years;* now there were sundry commandments given, or decrees made, by the kings of Persia who are intended, to this purpose; of these two were the most famous, the one granted by Cyrus in the first *year of his empire;*

Ezra i. 1. The other by Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his *reign;* Ezra vii. 12—14, Between the first of these and the death of Christ, there must be allowed five hundred and sixty-two years, unless you will offer violence unto all monuments, records, and circumstances of times in the world. It is, therefore, safer to interpret the general words of the angel of the *latter decree* or commandment, whose circumstances also make it more probable to be intended, wherein the spaces of time mentioned fall in exactly with other approved *histories* and records. Neither would I disallow another computation, which, contending for the first *decree of Cyrus* to be the beginning of the time mentioned, and allowing the whole space from thence to be really five hundred and sixty-two years, affirms that the Scripture excludes the consideration of the years *supernumerary* to the four hundred and ninety, because of the interruptions which at several seasons were put upon the people, in the accomplishment of the things foretold for so many years, which some suppose to be signified by the distribution of the whole number of *seventy weeks,* into *seven, sixty-two, and one,* each of which fractions hath its proper work belonging unto it. For this computation offers no *violence* either to sacred or unquestionable human authority.

But, on the other extreme, some there are who observing the difficulties in these accounts, as expressed in the Scripture from the beginning; having framed another *series of things* to themselves, openly diverse from that exhibited therein, and raked together from other authors, some things giving countenance unto their conjectures, do profanely make bold to break in upon the *original text,* accusing it of *imperfection* or *corruption;* which they will rectify by their *fine inventions,* and the aid of a *translation,* known to be mistaken in a *thousand places,* and in some justly suspected of wilful depravations. But this presumptuous confidence is nothing but an emanation from that *flood of atheism* which is breaking in on the world in these declining *ages* of it.

3. The third aid or assistance of this kind is a skill in the *ways and methods of reasoning,* which are supposed to be common unto the Scriptures with other writings. And this, as it is an *art,* or an *artificial faculty,* like those other means before mentioned, is capable of a right improvement, or of

being abused. An *ability to judge of the sense of propositions*, how one thing depends on another, how it is deduced from it, follows upon it, or is proved by it, what is the design of him that writes or speaks in any discourse or reasonings, how it is proposed, confirmed, illustrated, is necessary unto any rational consideration to be exercised about whatever is so proposed unto us. And when the minds of men are confirmed in a good *habit of judgment by the rules of the art of reasoning*, about the ordinary ways and methods of it, it is of great advantage in the *investigation of the sense* of any writer even of the Scripture itself. And those ordinarily who shall undertake the interpretation of any *series of Scripture* discourse, without some ability in this science, will find themselves oftentimes *entangled* and at a loss, where by virtue of it they might be at liberty and free. And many of the *rules* which are commonly given about the interpretation of the Scripture, as, namely, that the *scope* of the *author* in the place is duly to be considered, as also things *antecedent* and *consequent* to the place and words to be interpreted, and the like, are but directions for the due use of this *skill* or faculty.

But this also must be admitted with its limitations. For whatever perfection there seems to be in our art of reasoning, it is to be subjected to the wisdom of the Holy Ghost in the Scripture. His way of reasoning is always his own, sometimes *sublime* and *heavenly*, so as not to be reduced unto the common rules of our arts and sciences, without a derogation from its *instructive, convictive*, and *persuasive* efficacy. For us to frame unto ourselves *rules of ratiocination*, or to have our minds embondaged unto those of other men's invention and observation, if we think thereon absolutely to reduce all the reasonings in the Scripture unto them, we may fall into a presumptuous mistake. In the consideration of all effects of infinite wisdom there must be an allowance for the deficiency of our comprehension, when humble subjection of conscience, and the captivating of our understandings to the obedience of faith, is the best means of learning what is proposed unto us. And there is nothing more contemptible than the *arrogancy* of such persons, who think by the shallow measures and short lines of their own weak, dark, imperfect reasoning, to fathom the depths of Scripture senses.

Again, What sense soever any man supposeth or judgeth this or that particular place of Scripture to yield and give out to the best of his rational intelligence, is immediately to give place unto the *analogy of faith,* that is, the Scripture's own declaration of its sense in other places, to another purpose or contrary thereunto. The want of attending unto men's duty herein, with a *mixture of pride and pertinacy,* is the occasion of most errors and noxious opinions in the world. For when some have taken up a *private interpretation* of any place of Scripture, if before they have thoroughly imbibed and vented it, they do not submit their conceptions, although they seem to be greatly satisfied in it and full of it, unto the authority of the Scripture in the declaration of its own mind in other places, there is but small hope of their recovery. And this is that pride which is the source and original of *heresy;* namely, when men will prefer their *seemingly wise* and rational conceptions of the sense of *particular places,* before the *analogy* of faith.

Moreover, there is a pernicious mistake that some are fallen into about these things. They suppose, that taking in the help of *skill in the original languages* for the understanding of the words and their use, whether proper or figurative, that there is nothing more necessary to the understanding and interpretation of the Scripture, but only *the sedulous and diligent use of our own reason,* in the ordinary way, and according to the common rules of the *art of ratiocination.* For what, say they, can be more required, or what can men more make use of? By these means alone do we come to understand the meaning of any other *writer,* and, therefore, also of the Scripture. Neither can we, nor doth God require, that we should receive or believe any thing but according to our own reason and understandings. But these things, though in themselves they are, some of them, partly true, yet as they are used unto the end mentioned, they are perniciously false. For, (1.) it greatly unbecometh any Christian once to suppose that there is need *of no other assistance,* nor the use of any other means, for the interpretation of the oracles of God, or to come unto the understanding of the *hidden wisdom of God in the mystery of the gospel,* than is to the understanding or interpretation of the writings of men, which are the product of a finite, limited, and weak ability. Were

it not for some secret persuasion that the Scripture indeed is not what it pretends to be, *the word of the living God,* or that it doth not indeed express the *highest effect of his wisdom,* and deepest counsel of his will, it could not be that men should give way to such foolish imaginations. The principal matter of the Scripture is *mysterious,* and the mysteries of it are laid up therein by God himself, and that in a way *inimitable* by the skill or wisdom of men. When we speak of, and express the same things, according unto our measure of comprehension, wherein, from its agreement with the Scripture, what we say is *materially divine,* yet our words are not so, nor is there the same respect to the things themselves, as the expressions of the Scripture have, which are *formally* divine. And can we ourselves trace these paths of wisdom without his especial guidance and assistance? It is highly *atheistical* once to fancy it. (2.) We treat of such an interpretation of the Scripture as is *real,* and is accompanied with an understanding of the things proposed and expressed; and not merely of the *notional sense of propositions and expressions.* For we speak of such an interpretation of the Scripture as is a sanctified means of our *illumination;* nor any other doth either the Scripture require, or God regard. That to give in this unto us, notwithstanding the use and advantage of all outward helps and means, is the peculiar work of the Spirit of God, hath been before demonstrated. It is true, we can receive nothing, reject nothing, as to what is true or false, nor conceive the sense of any thing but by our own *reasons* and understandings. But the inquiry herein is, what *supernatural aid and assistance* our minds and natural reasons stand in need of, to enable them to receive and understand aright things spiritual and supernatural. And if it be true, that no more is required unto the due understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures, but the exercise of our *own reasons,* in and by the helps mention; namely, *skill in the original languages, the arts of ratiocination,* and the like, which are exposed unto all in common, according to the measure of their natural abilities and diligence, then is the sense of the Scripture, that is, the mind of God and Christ therein, *equally discernible,* or to be attained unto, by all sorts of men, good and bad, holy and

profane, believers and unbelievers, those who obey the word, and those who despise it; which is contrary to all the promises of God, and innumerable other testimonies of Scripture.

CHAP. IX.

Helps ecclesiastical in the interpretation of the Scripture.

THIRDLY, There are means and helps for the interpretation of the Scripture, which I call *ecclesiastical*. Those I intend which we are supplied withal by the *ministry of the church*, in all ages. And they may be referred unto three heads, under which their usefulness to this purpose is pleaded. As, 1. *Catholic or universal tradition*. 2. *Consent of the fathers*. 3. *The endeavours of any persons holy and learned*, who have gone before us in the investigation of the truth, and expressed their minds in writing, for the edification of others, whether of *old* or of *late*. These things belong unto the ministry of the church, and so far as they do so, are sanctified ordinances for the communication of the mind of God unto us,

1. It is pleaded by some that the Scripture is to be interpreted according to *catholic tradition* and no otherwise. And I do acknowledge that we should be inexpressibly obliged to them who would give us an interpretation of the *whole Scripture*, or of any *book in the Scripture*, or of any *one passage* in the Scripture, relating unto things of mere supernatural revelation, according unto that *rule*, or by the guidance and direction of it. But I fear no such tradition can be evidenced, unless it be of things manifest in the light of nature, whose universal preservation is an effect of the unavoidable reason of mankind, and not of any *ecclesiastical* tradition. Moreover, the Scripture itself is testified unto unanimously and uninterruptedly by all Christians to be the word of God; and hereby are all divine truths conveyed down from their original and delivered unto us. But a *collateral tradition* of any one truth or doctrine besides, from Christ and the apostles, cannot be proved. And if it could be so, it would be

no means of the interpretation of the Scripture, but only *objectively*, as one place of Scripture interprets another; that is, it would belong unto the *analogy of faith*, contrary to which, or in opposition whereunto, no place ought to be interpreted. To pretend this, therefore, to be the rule of the interpretation of Scripture *actively*, as though thereby we could certainly learn the meaning of it in *part or in whole*, is fond. Nor, whatever some do boast of, can any man living prove his interpretation of any one place, to be dictated by, or to be suitable unto, *universal tradition*, any otherwise but as he can prove it to be agreeable to the *Scripture* itself; unless we shall acknowledge without proof, that what is the mind and sense of some men who call themselves the church, at present, was the mind of Christ and his apostles, and of all true believers since, and that infallibly it is so. But this pretence hath been abundantly and sufficiently disproved, though nothing seems to be so, to the minds of men fortified against all evidences of truth by invincible prejudices.

2. The *joint consent of the fathers*, or ancient doctors of the church, is also pretended as a rule of Scripture interpretation. But those who make this *plea* are apparently influenced by their supposed interest so to do. No man of ingenuity, who hath ever read or considered them, or any of them, with attention and judgment can abide by this pretence. For it is utterly impossible they should be an *authentic rule* unto others, who so disagree among themselves, as they will be found to do, not, it may be, so much in *articles of faith*, as in their *exposition of Scripture*, which is the matter under consideration. About the former they express themselves diversely, in the latter they *really differ*, and that frequently. Those who seem most earnestly to press this *dogma* upon us, are those of the *church of Rome*. And yet it is hard to find one learned man among them, who hath undertaken to expound or write *commentaries* on the Scripture, but on all occasions he gives us the different senses, expositions, and interpretations of the fathers, of the same places and texts; and that where any difficulty occurs in a manner perpetually. But the pretence of the *authoritative determination* of the *fathers* in points of religion, hath been so disproved, and the vanity of it so fully discovered, as that it is altogether needless farther to insist upon it. And those who would seem to have found out a

middle way, between their *determining authority* on the one hand, and the *efficacy* of their *reasons*, with a due veneration of their piety and ability, which all sober men allow, on the other, do but trifle and speak words, whose sense neither themselves nor any other do understand.

3. We say, therefore, that the sole use of *ecclesiastical means* in the interpretation of the Scripture, is in the due consideration and improvement of that *light, knowledge, understanding* in, and those *gifts* for the declaration of, the mind of God in the Scripture, which he hath granted unto, and furnished them withal, who have gone before us in the *ministry* and work of the gospel. For as God in an especial manner, in all ages, took care that the doctrine of the gospel should be preached *viva voce*, to the present edification of the body of the church; so likewise almost from the beginning of its propagation in the world, presently after the decease of the apostles, and that whole divinely inspired society of preachers and writers, he stirred up and enabled sundry persons to declare by *writing* what their apprehensions were, and what *understanding* God had given them in and about the sense of the Scripture. Of those who designedly wrote comments and expositions on any part of the Scripture, Origen was the first, whose fooleries and mistakes occasioned by the prepossession of his mind with *platonical philosophy*, confidence of his own great abilities (which indeed were singular and admirable), with the curiosity of a speculative mind, discouraged not others from endeavouring with more sobriety and better success to write entire expositions on some parts of the Scripture; such among the Greeks were Chrysostom, Theodoret, Aretine, Œcomenius, Theophylact; and among the Latins, Hierom, Ambrose, Austin, and others. These have been followed, used, improved, by others innumerable in succeeding ages. Especially since the reformation hath the work been carried on with general success, and to the great advantage of the church. Yet hath it not proceeded so far, but that the best, most useful, and profitable labour in the Lord's vineyard, which any holy and learned man can engage himself in, is to endeavour the contribution of farther light in the opening and exposition of Scripture, or any part thereof. Now all these are singular helps and advantages unto the right un-

derstanding of the Scripture, of the same kind of advantage, as to that single end of light and knowledge, which preaching of the word is, used with sobriety, judgment, and a due examination of all by the text itself. For the *exposition of the fathers*, as it is a ridiculous imagination, and that which would oblige us to the belief of contradictions, and open mistakes, for any man to *authenticate* them so far as to bind us up unto an assent unto their conceptions and dictates because they are theirs; so they will not be despised by any, but such as have not been conversant in them. And it is easy to discern from them all, by the diversity of their gifts, ways, and designs, in the exposition of Scripture, that the Holy Spirit *divided unto them as he pleased;* which as it should make us reverence his presence with them, and assistance of them, so it calls for the freedom of our own judgments to be exercised about their conceptions. And for those of *latter* days, though the names of the principal and most eminent of them, as Bucer, Calvin, Martyr, Beza, are now contemned and despised by many, mostly by those who never once seriously attempted the exposition of any one chapter in the whole Scripture; yet those who firmly design to grow in the knowledge of God, and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, both do, and always will bless God for the assistance he gave them in their great and holy works, and in the benefit which they receive by their labours. These are the outward means and advantages which are requisite and to be used, as any one's calling, opportunity, ability, and work, do require, as helps to attain a right understanding of the mind of God in the Scripture. Now, concerning them all, I shall only say, that the Spirit of God makes them useful and prosperous according to the counsel of his own will. Some are prone in the use of them, to lean unto their own understandings, and consequently, to wander in and after the imaginations of their own minds, corrupting the word of God, and endeavouring to pervert his right ways thereby. Others he leaves in the *shell of the text* to exercise their skill about words, phrases, and expressions, without leading of them into the spiritual sense of the word, which is its life and power. In some he blesseth them to the full and proper end, but not unless they are in a compliance with the spiritual means and duties before insisted on.

From what hath been discoursed concerning the work of the Spirit of God in revealing unto believers the mind of God in the Scriptures, or the sense of that *revelation* made of it therein, two things will seem to follow. First, That those who have not that *assistance* granted to them, or that work of his wrought in them, cannot understand or apprehend the truth or doctrine of faith and obedience therein revealed. For, if that work of the Spirit be necessary thereunto, which they are not made partakers of, how can they come to any knowledge or understanding therein? Secondly, That those who are so influenced and guided, *must understand the whole Scripture aright*, and be freed from all mistakes in their conceptions about the mind of God; both which are contrary to the experience of all men in all ages; seeing many persons visibly destitute of any saving work of the Holy Ghost upon their minds, as is evident in that no renovation of them, or reformation of life, doth ensue thereon, have yet *attained a great acquaintance with the truth* as it is revealed in the word; and many who are *truly enlightened* and sanctified by him, do yet fall into sundry *errors* and mistakes, which the differences and divisions among themselves do openly proclaim. And the Scripture itself supposeth that there may be *diversity of judgments* about spiritual things, among those who are really sanctified and believers.

A brief answer unto both these exceptions will lead this discourse unto its close. I say, therefore, to the first: (1.) That there are in the declaration of the mind of God in the Scriptures sundry things that are *common unto other writings*, both as to the matter of them, and the manner of their delivery. Such are the *stories* of times past therein recorded, the *computation of times*, the use of words, *phrases of speech, figurative* and *proper, artificial* connexions of discourse, *various sorts of arguments*, and the like, all which persons may come to the understanding of, and be able to make a right judgment concerning, without any especial assistance of the Holy Spirit, the things about which they are conversant being the proper object of the reasonable faculties of the mind, provided there be a common blessing on their endeavours and exercise. (2.) The *main doctrines* of truth declared in the Scripture are proposed in such distinct, *plain enunciations*, in propositions accommodated unto the understandings of

rational men, that persons who in the use of *disciplinary* and *ecclesiastical helps,* attend unto the study of them without prejudices, or prepossession with false notions and opinions, with freedom from the bias of carnal or secular interests and advantages, and the leaven of tradition, may learn, know, and understand the sense, meaning, and truth of the doctrines so proposed and declared unto them, without any especial work of *saving illumination* on their minds. The propositions of truth in the Scripture, I mean those which are necessary unto the great ends of the Scripture, are so plain and evident in themselves, that it is the fault and sin of all men endued with rational abilities, if they perceive them not, and assent not unto them upon the evidence of their truth, or of the mind of God in those places of Scripture wherein they are declared; which is the substance of what we plead concerning the *perspicuity of the Scripture* against the *Papists.* (3.) Considering the *natural vanity* of the mind of man, its proneness to error and false imaginations, the weakness of judgment wherewith it is in all things accompanied, whatever it attains in the knowledge of truth is to be ascribed unto the guidance of the Spirit of God, although not working in it or upon it by a communication of saving light and grace. For, (4.) the knowledge of truth thus to be attained is not that *illumination* which we are inquiring after, nor doth it produce those effects of renewing the mind, and transforming it into the image of the things known, with the fruits of holy obedience, which are inseparable from saving illumination.

In answer unto the second pretended consequence of what we have discoursed, I say, (1.) That the promise of the Spirit, and the communication of him accordingly, to *teach, instruct,* guide, and lead us into truth, is suited unto that *great end* for which God hath made the revelation of himself in his word; namely, that we might live unto him here according to his will, and be brought into the enjoyment of him hereafter unto his glory. (2.) That unto this end it is not necessary that we should understand the *direct sense and meaning of any single text,* place, or passage in the Scripture, nor yet that we should obtain the knowledge of every thing revealed therein. It sufficeth in answer to the promise and design of the work of the Holy Ghost, that the *knowledge of all truth* necessary to be known unto that end, be communi-

cated unto us; and that we have so far a right understanding of the sense of the Scripture, as to learn that truth by the use of the means appointed unto that end. (3.) We are not hereby *absolutely secured* from particular errors and mistakes, no more than we are from all actual sins, by the work of the Spirit on our wills; that of both kinds, whilst we live in this world, being only in a tendency towards perfection. There is no faculty of our souls that is absolutely and perfectly renewed in this life. But as the *wills* of believers are so far renewed and changed by grace as to preserve them from *such sins*, as are inconsistent with a holy life according to the tenor of the covenant, which yet leaves a possibility of many infirmities and actual sins; so their *minds* are so far renewed as to know and assent to all truths *necessary to our life of obedience*, and a right understanding of the Scripture wherein they are revealed, which yet may be consistent with many mistakes, errors, and false apprehensions unto our great damage and disadvantage. But withal this must be added, that such are the teachings of the Spirit of God, as to all divine truths whatever, both in the *objective revelation* of them in the word, and in the *assistance* he gives us by his light and grace to perceive and understand the mind and whole counsel of God in that revelation, that it is not without our own *guilt*, as well as from our own *weakness*, that we fall into errors and misapprehensions about any Scripture proposals that concern our duty to God. And if all that believe, would freely forego all prejudices or preconceived opinions, and cast off all impressions from worldly considerations and secular advantages, giving themselves up humbly and entirely to the teachings of God in the ways of his own appointment, some whereof have been before insisted on, we might all come 'in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;' Eph. iv. 13. And these things may suffice to illustrate the work of the Holy Ghost in our *illumination*, with respect unto the external objective causes thereof, or the holy Scripture itself.

There is yet another work of the Holy Ghost with respect unto the Scripture, which although it fall not directly under the present consideration of the *ways and means of saving illumination*, yet the whole of what we have discoursed is so

resolved into it in the order of an external cause, as that it may justly claim a remembrance in this place; and this is, his *watchful care over the written word,* in preserving it from destruction and corruption, from the first writing of it unto this very day. That it hath been under the especial care of God, not only the event of its entire preservation, considering the opposition it hath been exposed unto, but also the testimony of our Saviour, as to the *books of the Old Testament,* than which those of the New are certainly of no less esteem or use, do sufficiently evince; Matt. v. 18. 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.' That by the *law* the whole writings of the Old Testament are intended, the context doth declare. And what he affirms, that it shall not by any means pass away, that is, be abolished or corrupted, that he taketh on himself to preserve and secure. Two things the Scripture in itself is subject unto: (1.) *Destruction* or *abolition,* as unto the whole or any necessary part thereof. (2.) *Corruption of the writing* by changes, alterations, and falsifications of the copies of it. And by both of these it hath been attempted, and that both before and since the time of the promulgation of the gospel; the stories whereof are known. And yet is it come safe off from all, not only without *ruin,* but without *wound* or *blemish.* For any one to suppose that this hath been done by chance, or by the care of men alone, without the especial watchful providence and powerful actings of the Spirit of God, in the pursuit of the promise of Christ that it should not fail, which expressed a care that God had taken on himself to make good from the beginning, is not only to neglect the consideration of the nature of all human affairs, with the revolutions that they are subject unto, and the deceit and violence wherewith the Scriptures have been attacked, with the insufficiency of the powers and diligence employed for their preservation; but also to countenance *atheistical notions,* that God hath no especial regard to his word and worship in the world. Indeed, for a man to think and profess that the Scripture is the word of God, given unto men for the ends which itself declares, and of that use which it must be of in being so, and not believe that God hath always taken, and doth take, especial care of its preservation, and that in its purity and integrity, beyond the ordinary ways of his

providence in the rule of all other things, is to be sottish and foolish, and to entertain thoughts of God, his goodness, wisdom, and power, infinitely unworthy of him and them. There have of late been some opinions concerning the *integrity and purity* of the Scriptures, invented and maintained, that I conceive take off from the reverence of that relation which the Scripture hath, in its integrity and purity, unto the care and glory of God. Hence it is by some maintained that some books written by divine inspiration, and given out unto the church as part of its *canon*, or rule of faith and obedience, are utterly lost and perished. That the *law* and *Scripture* of the Old Testament before the *captivity*, were written though in the Hebrew *tongue* (which they say was not originally the language of Abraham derived from Heber, but of the posterity of Cham in Canaan), yet not in the *letters* or *characters* which are now in use, but in those which a few wicked idolaters, called Samaritans, did use and possess, being left unto them by Ezra, and new characters invented by him, or borrowed from the Chaldeans for the use of the church. That the *vowels and accents*, whereby alone the true reading and sense of it is preserved, are a late invention of some Masorethical Rabbins; and that the *original text* is in many places corrupted, so as that it may and ought to be corrected by translations, especially that of the LXX, with sundry other such imaginations, which they countenance with uncertain conjectures, and fabulous stories. And I cannot but wonder how some seem to take *shelter unto their opinions*, especially that of preferring the *translation of the LXX* unto the original Hebrew text, or as they fondly speak, the present copy of it, in the church of England, whose *publicly authorized and excellent translation*, takes no more notice, nor hath any more regard unto that translation, when it differs from the Hebrew, as it doth in a thousand places, than if it had never been in the world. And as no translations are in common use in the whole world, but what were immediately traduced out of the Hebrew original, excepting only some *part of the vulgar Latin;* so I verily believe, that those very Christians who contend for a *preference* to be given unto that of the LXX, now they have got their ends, or at least attempted them in procuring a reputation of learning, skill, and cunning, by their *writings about it*, would not dare to

advise a translation out of that to be made and composed for the use of that *church* which they adhere unto, be it what it will; to the rejection and exclusion of that taken out of the original. And to have two recommended unto common use, so discrepant as they would be found to be, would certainly be of more disadvantage to the church, than by all their endeavours otherwise they can compensate. Yea, I am apt to think, that they will not be very urgent for an alteration to be made in the *church's translation* in those particular instances wherein they hope they have won themselves much reputation, in proving the *mistakes of the Hebrew,* and manifesting how it may be rectified by the *translation* of the LXX. For whatever thoughts may be in their minds concerning their learned disputes, I doubt not but they have more reverence of God and his word, than to break in upon it with such a kind of violence, on any pretence whatsoever. As therefore, the integrity and purity of the Scripture in the *original languages* may be proved and defended against all opposition, with whatever belongs thereunto, so we must ascribe their preservation to the watchful care, and powerful operation of the Spirit of God absolutely securing them throughout all generations.

END OF VOL. III.

Printed by J. F. Dove, St. John's Square.